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The hard-drinking ... ancestors of the Dutch Calvinists...p. 6

What's the problem with doctrine? ...p.8

59th year of publication

A health-care fix for a generation?

Harry der Nederlanden

Health care was touted as the central issue of the election campaign by Paul Martin and the Liberal Party; he promised "a health care fix for a generation!" The issue also attracted constant scrutiny and discussion in our newspapers and magazines over the past couple of years, and has been one of the most studied of our services, meriting no fewer than three major studies in recent years. No wonder, for it also gobbles up the lion's share of the budget and its costs are rising faster than any other.

Prime Minister Paul Martin

The so-called health summit in mid September yielded an impressive agreement between Martin and the provincial premiers. All the participants seemed quite pleased with themselves and Martin got a standing ovation when he returned to his cabinet waving the agreement like Neville Chamberlain – health care in our time.

What is its significance? Did Martin achieve his promised 'health care for a generation,' downgraded just prior to the meeting with the premiers to a 'deal for a decade' (half a generation isn't half bad)? Or was it only, as some premiers said as they were departing with bulging pockets: "Not a bad beginning"? With the implication that they'd soon be back demanding more.

Misgivings

While Conservative leader Stephen Harper seemed quite pleased with the final result, some members of Martin's own party expressed deep misgivings. Harper was surprised to see that the provinces retained almost complete control over how the funds dispensed by the federal government will be spent. This was part of his election platform: over against Martin's insistence that the funds would come with strings attached, he had insisted that health care remain a wholly provincial matter.

The Trudeau and Chretien Liberals grumbled that Martin had given away everything including the kitchen sink and our nest egg. Not only did Martin commit the federal government to an overly expensive program, they felt, he did so without securing federal control, thereby weakening the central government and the unity of Canada.

However, John Geddes, writing in *MacLean's*, comes to the opposite conclusion. He sees Martin engineering a permanent federal incursion into an important area that has always been provincial territory, not just in the area

Continued on page 2...

UN continues to dither in face of humanitarian tragedy in Sudan

The situation in the Darfur region of Sudan, which has been labeled a major humanitarian crisis for several months by every major news agency in the world, has now officially been declared genocide – at least, by the US. The application of the label to what was first called a tribal conflict, then a humanitarian crisis and then ethnic cleansing is not a meaningless play with words. The Genocide Convention says that if the UN determines that a genocide is taking place it can take any action it considers "appropriate for the prevention and suppression of such acts."

When US Secretary of State Colin Powell made his statement Sept. 9, he said that genocide has been committed in Darfur, that the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed (militia) bear responsibility and that genocide may still be occurring.

Many of the news media have been referring to the slaughter and displacement of hundreds of thousands of Fur people in western Sudan as genocide for a couple of months already, but the UN and the European Union have been reluctant to use the term. "We want to concentrate on keeping the government of Sudan engaged and not go down a path that could terminate that engagement," said Munir Akram, the Pakistani ambassador [to the U.N.].

Many fear that by calling its actions genocide, the US may provoke the Sudan government into less cooperation with the international community in doing its humanitarian work. China, one of the members of the Security Council, has blocked strong action because it has invested heavily in Sudan's oil industry.

The Sudanese government has rejected the description by the United States of the conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur as genocide and accused Washington of exploiting a humanitarian crisis for political gain.

The UN did pass a resolution that threatens to consider sanctions if Sudan does not show that it is reining in the militias, but it has dragged its feet every step of the way, and the strongest action the UN has been able to muster is to convene an impartial commission of experts to investigate reports of genocide and other war crimes in Sudan – as if further evidence is necessary.

Although Jan Pronk of the Netherlands, after visiting the area on behalf of the UN at the beginning of September, reported that the Sudanese government had made some progress toward disarming the Janjaweed militias, almost every other source reported the contrary. The African Union confirmed helicopter attacks against Darfur villages, and reporters interviewing refugees heard story after story of cooperation between government forces and the Janjaweed. In the second half

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Displaced people in Sudan

Health-care fix

...cont. from p. 1

of health care but also in two more areas still to be negotiated – child care and a new deal for the cities. "The feds are coming!" is the title of his article.

The summit

The health-care summit did not have very auspicious beginnings, and the meetings were viewed with a tired cynicism by journalists as well as the Canadian populace, according to an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted just before the meetings. Very few people expected them to yield much. People tended to agree with Ralph Klein, who thumbed his nose at what he called "the gong show" and sneered that it was all about money. Perhaps. But what a lot of money!

It struck many as a bit perverse that the premiers, coming out of their meeting held a week before the summit, issued a demand that the federal government foot the bill for an entirely new large-scale and very expensive pharmacare program. It may have been in part a negotiating ploy for the premiers. After all, Martin's stated goal for the meeting was to address the politically hot issue of waiting lists, deteriorating services, cuts and financial shortfalls.

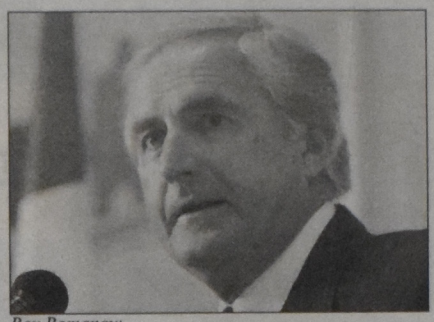
However, the steepest increases in recent years have been in drugs. They can bankrupt a person every bit as surely as expensive surgery and a long hospital stay used to do. In fact, hospital stays have been greatly reduced now. This is why the Romanow report recommended adding pharmacare and home care (enabling an abbreviated hospital stay) to the health care services paid for by our taxes. So the premiers' demand was not without foundation.

Many argue that bulk buying by the government means much lower drug prices for everyone. The Fraser Institute, a conservative think-tank, argues, on the contrary, that when the consumer no longer pays his own bill, prices tend to rise and doctors tend to prescribe more expensive meds.

Whatever the case, even before the meeting Martin declared that what the premiers were demanding was beyond Ottawa's capacity to pay. By some estimates, pharmacare alone would swallow up the increase that the premiers were demanding from the federal coffers, leaving waiting lists untouched. Politically, Martin could not tolerate such an outcome.

After the first day, we learned that Martin was offering some $12.2 billion but that the premiers wanted about three times that. Scoffing at the PM's offer, Ralph Klein packed his suitcase and flew home after the first day. In the middle of the proceedings, a microphone caught Martin cursing under his breath, and that became the story of the day. Not good for *his* health.

On the third day of the televised meetings Martin and the premiers emerged smiling, Martin because he had fulfilled his election promise (sort of, anyway) and the premiers because they were returning to their respective provinces with an infusion of federal monies far beyond anyone's expectations – over $40 billion in the next ten years, $18 billion the next six years. Ralph Goodale, the Minister of Finance, had to keep reassuring everyone that the money will be there; in fact, it already is there, and there's plenty left for other programs promised by the Liberals, like child care, a new deal for the cities and the environment. Where's it all coming from? From *The Surplus*.



Roy Romanow

Canada, it seems, is one of the very, very few countries that does not have to struggle to pay escalating health care costs from burdensome taxes; it can pay for all sorts of social programs from *The Surplus*.

Ottawa and the provinces

The sceptics, of course, moaned that once again all that the government has done is throw money at the problem and that this will not fix what ails our system. It does not deal with ever escalating health care costs due to new technologies and new drugs and the stresses put on the system by an aging population. What of the Kirby Report and the Romanow Report, each of which interviewed hundreds of people at a cost of many millions of tax dollars, to say nothing of studies done by associations of medical professionals and by the provinces? Ancient history, said Manitoba Premier Gary Doer. They were all superceded by Martin's campaign promises. For Ottawa to implement country-wide reforms it would have to intervene in what has always been in the provincial domain. Martin saw quite early that to attempt that would not yield the deal he needed.

Although even some in his own party complained that Martin had not negotiated but merely given in, turning the federal government into nothing more than a tax collector and banker for the provinces, the money does not come without some strings attached. Martin has always insisted that he would set benchmarks for such things as waiting periods. The premiers, especially Quebec, resisted, saying that this would constitute an incursion by the federal government into provincial affairs. The benchmarks are part of the deal, but they will be set by the provinces themselves, who have until the end of next year to work them out. The premiers have also pledged to agree on a common standard of measurement.

It's a clever compromise. The premiers had insisted that Ottawa is not going to dictate terms to the provinces, and that won't happen. But Ottawa will insist that there be standards. While these won't be the same in all provinces, there will be a common method of measurement so that people from each province can see how theirs is faring in comparison to other provinces.

The critics

Critics from the right fear that the huge infusion of cash will relax pressure on the system to seek innovative ways to deliver health care in more economical ways. Instead the present inefficient ways will become more deeply entrenched and the system will become ever more inflexible and unwieldy, unable to respond flexibly to new technologies and therapies. They are convinced that only private enterprise is capable of flexibility.

Others keep repeating the sacred mantra that private enterprise would destroy the system and keep evoking the Two-tier boogeyman, as if it were a sin against humanity if a rich person be allowed to spend any of his own money on trying to save his own life. They want the federal government above all to keep any private clinics out of the system. One of the first priorities – a purely ideological one – of Premier Dalton McGuinty has been to acquire the MRI machines operated by private companies in Ontario. But why not? He can afford it now.

Canadian health care has been a hybrid from the beginning, combining the best of public and private systems. The government acts like an insurer and the doctors contract to work for fees set by the government. Testing services, some home care and in some provinces screening with expensive MRI machines, are purchased from private corporations. Initially other health services like drugs, home care and ambulance services fell outside the system, but more and more people are demanding that they be covered as well, or at least protected against catastrophic costs. While the Kirby Report sought innovative ways to provide such services, the Romanow Report recommended that they be absorbed into the system.

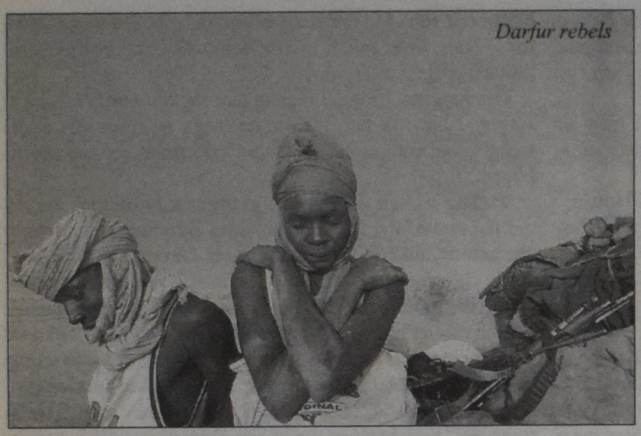
Whether private or public, it all comes from the same source, not *The Surplus*, but your pocket. It is to be hoped that decisions will be made not according to ideology, whether from the left or the right, but according to which methods will deliver the highest possible health care equitably and affordably.

Easy and equitable access to health care is a great gift, and it doesn't just require great outlays of money but also vigilance on the part of politicians, medical professionals and us, this country's citizens, and cooperation on many levels. Good health care is not a natural right but a civic one that demands hard work to keep it within reach of everyone. It will not sustain itself, not even for one generation.

Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty and Paul Martin

Politics

Sudan... *cont from p. 1*



Darfur rebels

of September relief workers said that people were still being driven from their villages by the militias, who continued their rampage of looting and rape.

In fact, Oxfam Canada reported a new influx of refugees in a southern refugee camp, in the area of the Christian minority where a peace treaty is supposed to be in force. About 10,000 people arrived at Gereida, 100 km south of Nyala, fleeing attacks from the same militias that have been despoiling western Sudan.

On September 22 the UN reported that the number of people affected by conflict in the troubled region of Darfur rose to 1.8 million in August, of whom 1.45 million were internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Prime Minister Paul Martin, addressing the UN Sept. 21, gave the world a stern tongue-lashing for its apathy over toward Sudan. Less than a week earlier, however, he himself had drawn criticism in Canada for not paying more attention to events there. He was not willing to use the word "genocide" when reporters asked him whether he agreed with Powell's assessment. He responded, "Our intervention should depend upon the human tragedy that is occurring, not on some legal definition."

Martin emphasized that Canada had called for UN intervention in June, including a larger African Union force. (At present, the African Union has sent in a few dozen observers and some soldiers to protect them.)

Canada has given $14.5 million since last October toward helping those who have fled to refugee camps within Darfur and in neighboring Chad.

Wrote the Economist: "While the Sudanese government and the rebels have made excuse after excuse, and the world powers on the Security Council have bickered over each last comma in the proposed resolution, the plight of Darfur's people has barely improved. There have been a few positive signs, most notably the AU's willingness to broker a settlement between the government and rebels, and to contribute troops to keep the peace. But it has all been too little, too late for the 50,000 or so already dead and the hundreds who continue to succumb each day in the refugee camps."

The UN's dithering on Sudan has not given much ammunition to those who have been arguing that the situation in Iraq should have been left to the UN.

Commenting in *The New York Times*, David Brooks said: "Confronted with the murder of 50,000 in Sudan, Washington eschewed all that nasty old unilateralism, all that hegemonic, imperialist, go-it-alone, neoconservative, empire, coalition-of-the-coerced stuff. America's response to this crisis would be so exquisitely multilateral, meticulously consultative, collegially cooperative and ally-friendly that it would make John Kerry swoon and a million editorialists nod in sage approval.

"And so we Americans mustered our outrage at the massacres in Darfur and went to the United Nations. And calls were issued and exhortations were made and platitudes spread like bearnaise. The great hum of diplomacy signaled that the global community was whirring into action.

"Meanwhile helicopter gunships were strafing children in Darfur."

The UN passed its toothless resolution, and continued Brooks: "The resolution passed, and it was a good day for alliance-nurturing and burden-sharing – for the burden of doing nothing was shared equally by all. And we are by now used to the pattern. Every time there is an ongoing atrocity, we watch the world community go through the same series of stages: (1) shock and concern (2) gathering resolve (3) fruitless negotiation (4) pathetic inaction (5) shame and humiliation (6) steadfast vows to never let this happen again."

But Brooks is one of those nasty American conservatives who are far too eager to intervene abroad in the name of Western values. There is one comfort: at least were not guilty of militarism like those Americans.

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Warfare and the just use of force

The mainstream of Christianity, including the Reformed tradition, has adhered to something called the just war position. Originating in Augustine's reflections a millennium and a half ago, and further elaborated by Thomas Aquinas, Hugo Grotius and others, this position begins with the assumption that the doing of justice, to which everyone is called, may necessitate the measured use of force under certain circumstances. Criteria must be brought to bear to determine the justice of a proposed military action, including: (1) The cause must be justified; (2) the intention must be right; (3) the war must be waged by a competent authority; (4) the war must have a reasonable probability of success; and (5) it must be fought only as a last resort. These are known as *ad bellum* principles in that they determine whether a country should go to war in the first place.

In bello principles, that is, those principles governing the conduct of war itself, are as follows: (1) Non-combatants, neutrals and third parties must not be harmed; (2) existing laws and treaties must be honored; (3) the means must be proportionate to the goals; (4) the enemy must know the terms on which peace can be achieved; (5) the goal must be the return of the aggressor to a rightful place among nations.

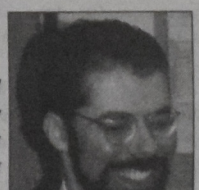
In recent decades many Christians appear largely to have abandoned the just war tradition, either because they see it as incapable of addressing the dilemmas of a nuclear age or because their understanding of justice has shifted away from an acknowledgement of its retributive character. Along with this has come a reluctance to contemplate the use of force in its defence.

However, many of us who accept the continuing validity of the just war tradition are nevertheless reluctant to plunge into warfare too quickly for other reasons. Indeed the use of force in warfare presents difficulties not present in a domestic police action. A police force by its very nature is responsible for supporting a domestic legal system and maintaining civil peace. It is part of a structure of authority consisting of legislatures, executives, bureaucratic departments, regulatory agencies and courts. Clear lines of authority and accountability exist and the use of force is hemmed in by them.

However, in a state of war two or more duly constituted military forces battle, not actual criminals, but each other. To be sure, one side may have a greater claim to justice than the other. But due to the precarious nature of the international arena, there is no certainty that the "right side" will win, especially if the other side is more powerful. Moreover, because each side is fighting in accordance with its own laws and the policies of its own government, there is perhaps a sense in which some measure of right, or justice, is found in both. Yet they clash and one may well suffer defeat.

This does not mean that just war principles are no longer relevant; I strongly believe they are. Yet if many of us are reluctant to resort to warfare too quickly, it is not necessarily because we believe the use of coercive force is intrinsically wrong. It is because its use is precarious at best, particularly for a small state with limited resources. Furthermore, innocents are more likely to suffer the effects of war than they are a domestic police action.

This underscores the need to build and support international institutions towards some form of global order. Though not a substitute for military force, these might serve to prevent some wars or at least to limit their destructive potential.



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Uneditorial

Won't she be surprised

Harry der Nederlanden

The wife's off visiting her mother in Iowa with our oldest daughter. The two youngest are cracking the books, burning the midnight oil and following their dreams at Calvin College. Or perhaps just dreaming. The house is strangely quiet and spacious. I sing a verse or two of "Joshua fit the battle of Jericho," but my voice echoes through the house, emphasizing its emptiness. And there's no one to admire my improvisations.

Strolling to the living room, I turn on the radio there and sit awhile staring at the piano. Then at the carpet. The threadbare carpet accuses me, and I move the area rug so it covers the bare spot. But that exposes a bare spot on the other end.

So I move to the family room and turn on the television. *The Amazing Race* is on. But the great race isn't so great if you can't interrupt your wife's reading, shouting, "Look at this! Look at what those crazy Americans are up to now! And for a measly million!"

Why this show is so popular I don't know. It's almost a stereotype of the ugly American tearing through other cultures with rude abandon in quest of big bucks. There are enough people who see them that way already.

The carpet in this the family room is much newer, but it sure is getting soiled near the door. And over there – a ketchup stain. I should have waited till I was at the table before biting into that hot dog.

Before the wife returns, I should clean this carpet. Yeah, that would be a neat surprise. I'll stack all the furniture on the far side of the room. Give me something to do.

The cat scurries into the kitchen as I drag off his favorite chair. Tomorrow after work I'll rent one of those carpet cleaning thingameebobs.

After all the furniture is stacked up, I'm really pumped up and in the mood. The night is young, and my back hasn't started protesting yet.

You know what? While I'm at it, I'll make the surprise even bigger: I'll tear out that threadbare carpet in the living room. Rose has been talking about doing that for the last ten years.

After piling up the living room furniture in the dining area, I pry up one of the seams with a putty knife and pull up on the carpet. It lifts quite easily, but rolling up the whole thing would be tricky.

Do it in strips – that's right, I've seen small rolls of carpet put out for the trash. You cut the carpet into meter-wide strips. The bread knife should work.

And it does. Before you can say "This Old House," there's a wide strip cut out of the center of our wool living room carpet. It's in surprisingly good shape. Not a lot of dirt in it either. Too bad I can't make it all the way to the wall, though, but I'm not going to jeopardize my back trying to move a piano and sundry wall units by myself.

In about an hour's time, most of the carpet has been cut into strips and rolled into neat rolls. I'm sweating and grimy, my knees and back are beginning to protest. Time for a break. Better make it instant coffee; no use perking a pot for one person.

As I wait for the water to heat, I notice that the counters are awfully cluttered. How often do we use that cappuccino machine? It's been over a year. One of my daughter's sudden cravings. And the bread maker? Ditto. The mixer could be stored somewhere out of sight too. Hey, doing some work in the kitchen will loosen my back before I get back to work on the carpet.

By the time I'm done in the kitchen, the evening news is on. Cup in hand I stand in the living room doorway, admiring my handiwork. The carpet pad now exposed in the living room is flat and hard as a dirt floor. How many years has it been? Thirty? Maybe longer. Let's see how easily it lifts up....

It doesn't. I can't even get a putty knife under it. The pad is laminated to the floor and my putty knife is too dull. I'll have to use something else, a paint scraper.

After fifteen minutes of scraping, a small rectangle of floor is exposed, sort of. This is harder than scraping a half dozen layers of paint off farm houses like I did forty years ago. And now my legs are threatening to go into spasm.

Enough for now. Look at all that's been accomplished in one evening – the living room, the family room, the kitchen. And the wife's not going to be back for a whole week. A couple of hours work a night should do it.

As I'm brushing my teeth in the bathroom getting ready for bed, the putty knife falls out of my back pocket. Picking it up off the floor, I notice that one of the tiles near the counter looks loose. When I jab at it a little with the putty knife, it pops off and shatters on the floor. And so does the one next to it.

Those sure came off easily. And Rose hates that color. Just a few weeks ago she was saying that no one has green bathroom fixtures anymore, and the tiles around the bathtub move when you press them. Wouldn't Rose be surprised if when she came back those ugly tiles were gone? And we had a sparkling white tub and toilet? That would be a neat surprise.

Of course, the bathroom cabinet is in bad shape too. Might as well replace that while I'm at it. Look, the veneer peels right off.

Aah, it feels great to go to bed with so many exciting projects on the go. Ouch. Better take a tylenol.

The next day, after work I arrive home a bit late and realize that I forgot to stop at the grocery store to rent the carpet cleaner thingameebob.

Should have stopped at the hardware store too for a new scraper, and for some advice on how best to remove bathroom tile. Maybe before I start I should price new tubs. Nah, how much can a new tub cost? People are replacing them every day.

Opening the fridge, I realize that there's another thing I forgot: I have to eat. A few leftovers will tide me over tonight, but tomorrow I'll have to do some serious shopping.

Pulling a chair off the pile in the family room, I watch the tail end of the Jim Lehrer News Hour as my leftovers are getting nuked in the microwave. Out on the deck, the cat is clawing one of the posts, which is gradually diminishing in girth. The deck railings are a mess. Maybe I should do something about them as well.

Stepping outside, I see to my horror that a large number of Rose's plants are not just drooping but in a severe state of narcolepsy. Did she tell me to water them? No I think not. So I have an out: I can always say, "You didn't tell me they needed watering."

The weather is too beautiful to be working indoors anyway; time to do a little work outside. How many of these containers and pots are there anyhow?

An hour later I'm still watering flowers. The sun is setting, and the mosquitos rising, but it's still light enough to see that there are ripe tomatoes out in the garden that need picking ... and didn't Rose say something about green beans and yellow beans before she left?

After bolting down my leftovers, now cold, I'm ready to get back to my project, my homecoming surprise. Lacking a new scraper for the living room, I decide to focus on the bathroom tiles. After peeling off the old ones, I can shop for new ones tomorrow when I get my new floor scraper. Beginning above the bathtub, I tap the handle of the putty knife with my hammer, and the top tiles crash into the tub. Piece of cake. The next row, however, is less cooperative. I have to whack the putty knife a little harder. The tiles begin to come off in small fragments rather than whole tiles at a time. Maybe it depends on the angle at which you hold the knife. There, much better. But now a thin layer of plaster is coming off as well, and I'm skinning my knuckles on the rough wall.

A few minutes later, having dug a pair of old leather gloves out of the mitten box, I'm ready to resume my project with renewed determination. Bang, bang – CRASH!

Wow, that was at least three tiles with one blow. But they took with them not just a thin layer of white plaster but at least an inch of the dark stuff as well. The plaster is as crumbly here as Dutch rusk dipped in tea.

After a few futile attempts to teach my putty knife to distinguish tile from wall, I realize I'm not just into removing tiles but entire walls. No matter. I've watched *This Old House*. You just go to your local hardware store where your friendly expert will steer you to an easy fix. There's always an easy fix. There has to be – I can't afford to hire some high-priced carpenter.

Besides, this has to be done before Rose gets home. Won't she be surprised.

Maybe the holes won't matter: that tub-surround stuff will cover a host of sins. On the other hand, you can't very well put tub-surround around the entire bathroom....

First thing the next morning when I peek into the bathroom, the sight is not encouraging. It reminds me of those scenes in war movies where soldiers burst into a room after tossing in a couple of grenades. A grenade would have been so much faster. All this damage is the result of over two hours of careful chipping away tile by tile. I even missed Nightline last night.

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Letters

"Toeing" the line

In Manitoba the word is you toe the "party" line or you are fired.

Carolyn Kaus, director of Vital statistics in Manitoba has told all marriage commissioners if they disagree with a local judges opinion on same sex marriage they are FIRED. Although you may be a conscientious objector you will have no choice but to perform a so-called gay or lesbian marriage.

So where are those news reporters who taut freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of this and that, but not freedom for those who believe in family values. Lawyers, judges and liberal politicians, conveniently hide behind the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to push their hidden agenda, and that has got to be the biggest farce in this whole equation.

The press is not unbiased, it is toeing the party line!

N. Hogeveen
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Does WARC speak for me?

Up until 2004, representatives of the Christian Reformed Church North America (CRCNA) have attended council meetings of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) as observers. This was the first year that the CRC was officially represented as a member church. In line with Synod's 2002 recommendation authorizing the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) to apply for the since approved membership, the IRC appointed Dr. David H. Engelhard as the delegate to the 24th General Council of WARC held in Accra, Ghana, from July 30 through August 13, 2004, and cancelled the appointment of two additional others on costing grounds.

That background, decision and appointment was appropriately recorded for information purposes in the Agenda for Synod 2004, as was the General Council's theme "That All May Have Life in Fullness." Other relevant WARC Council documentation was also available for study prior to the Accra meeting in the form of topics of discussion. There is no indication that our delegate received any guidance or expression of sentiments prior to attending.

It is against this background that you report that a single CRC representative on the first time that the CRC took part as a member church, committed the entire denomination without any apparent wider consultation to the declaration issued by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Reformed churches declare capitalism and globalization idolatry, *CC*, Aug 30/04)

I am not quite sure why I am less than comfortable, but I am. It is somewhat different when the equivalent occurs at Synod. We elect delegates to Classis locally, Classis elects delegates to Synod and while delegates are not bound, they have the benefit of congregational sentiments based on a prior local discussion of – at mininum – important agenda points or general awareness of what lives in the hearts and minds of congregants. One feels very much part of the whole. I cannot say that I feel the same with respect to the WARC initiative.

As you rightly point out in your accompanying editorial *On identifying the devil*, it is clear that I have an obligation to thoughtfully consider the WARC statement, because not all is well with us and the world in which we live. Any considered statement capable of motivating us to do better, deserves our attention. Yet much of what WARC condemns in political and economic spheres, I often think of as actually experiencing God's blessings in a personal, community and national sense. These enabling blessings are now labeled idolatry.

Perhaps it is my distaste for thinly disguised USA bashing with the reference to system of domination centered "in the last remaining superpower," engaged in a evil global conspiracy. Suddenly I got the sense that, according to WARC Christianity is the cause of all that is wrong in the world, the source of all conflict and disruptions, and that all heartbreaking stories belong at the doorstop of those who bear Christ's name. It is as if WARC implies that it all must be torn down and replaced by WARC-designed and managed political theology and if people and nation-states would only do that, the world will be a better place.

I expect my church to confront me with The Word and to provide me with guidance how I should live. I do not expect it as an institution to have one person commit me as a member of the CRC to what amounts to a revolutionary political platform of a third party.

I am more inclined to identify with the delegate from The Netherlands, who objected to the language of the report but was overruled by North American (May I assume including by the CRC?) and Latin American delegates who defended the language used as "an important aspect of the mission of Christ." As you point out, the declaration not only speaks on my behalf, but also to me, and now my church by its endorsement tells me officially that its content and aim form part of the mission of our Lord.

That's quite a teaching and it gives me much to think about.

Ralph L. De Groot
Peterborough, Ontario

My editorial, I regret to say, did not make it clear what the CRC involvement in WARC entails. I don't believe it commits us to the WARC statement. I have invited David Engelhard to reply, but he could not do so in time for this issue. Look for it in the next CC.

Harry der Nederlanden

Re: H. Antonides, Podhoretz, and the Bush Doctrine

I received your September 13th edition in which Mr. Antonides embraces Norman Podhoretz as the voice of reason and balance on the Iraqi invasion question. I had read the Podhoretz "masterpiece" called "World War IV: How It Started, What It Means, and Why We Have to Win," prior to receiving your paper, and had a different reaction to that work than Mr. Antonides'.

It certainly is a well-written essay, but as remarkable for its omissions as for its content. Nevertheless, when shaken out, it amounts to nothing more than an apologia for the militaristic hegemony of the U.S.A. in the 21st century, complete with a revisionist history of the blood-stained 20th century. When all is considered, it is a frightening document.

It is however an important piece, for it posits the philosophical grounding for the Bush administration's troubled and troubling foreign policy. Militarist, it is, to its core. The title of the essay itself proclaims our present predicament to be nothing less than "World War IV…." The language has thus progressed from the President's declaration of "The War on Terror" to the more recent "Global War on Terror" to Podhoretz's "World War IV."

This is the idiolect of military escalation. It betrays an ancient, misguided but abiding faith in military solutions to the human problem of getting along together in the world.

One only has to examine the so-called four pillars of what Podhoretz calls "The Bush Doctrine" which exemplify this militarism.

The first pillar of the doctrine is the personification of evil in the opponent. Recall the President's rather strident nomination of the "Axis of Evil" consisting of the nations of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. The demonization of the "other" is the first act of war, and the precursor to physical violence. It forecloses any further discussion. It eliminates the need and, indeed, the possibility of understanding between dissentients. To call a person Evil is to call him capricious. One need not consider motivation, or understand mindset, once one has condemned the other as evil.

The first pillar of the Bush Doctrine abdicates any imperative to embrace the enemy in love, in favor of violence and aggression. Furthermore, the first pillar externalizes evil. When we identify the other as "evil" we imply that we are "good." I hardly need point out the irony of this in the U.S. Iraqi context. Could one not characterize as "evil" the declaration of war, the bombing of inhabited cities, and the sendoff of soldiers to their death – all under the false pretexts of the presence of WMD and an immanent threat? Undoubtedly evil is real. However no one has a monopoly on good or evil.

The second pillar of the Bush Doctrine, as identified by Podhoretz, is the doctrine of "regime change." By this doctrine, the U.S. administration would identify those nations which constituted the "swamps" in which this murderous (terrorist) plague bred, and "drain the swamps." (This rather provocative language is Podhoretz's.)

It is surprising that Podhoretz doesn't mind raising this doctrine. "Regime change" was in fact announced by the President in the early days of the lead up to the Iraqi invasion, but quickly abandoned in favor of the immanent danger/WMD argument, when the concept of "regime change" was found to be too Machiavellian and morally repugnant for even the post 9/11 American public.

For who exactly decides which nations will be identified and targeted as a swamp and taken out? The answer is the President. He and his aids get to decide which regime is a "swamp," to be "changed" and which is not.

The ironies again are breathtaking. The

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Letter/Review

The hard-drinking, merrymaking ancestors of the Dutch Calvinists

Harry der Nederlanden

Life in the Netherlands: Life in the Rural Areas of the Western Part of The Netherlands from the Sixteenth till the Twentieth Century

By A. Bothof and C. Bothof
Translated by John Hofstee
154 pp, $25.00 (Includes GST)

Here's a book for *CC* readers interested in their Dutch ancestry. Begun as a study in genealogy, it widened into a study of daily life in the Dutch countryside from the 16th to 19th century. The book is competently translated from the Dutch by John Hofstee and is self-published in an 8.5 x 11 format. It has a bit of a stuffy, scholarly style but is more popular than academic. Anyone with a curiosity about the popular mores of the Dutch will enjoy this book. Although its stated focus is rural life in Western Holland, a great deal of it applies to life in the towns and in other provinces as well.

Much of our early knowledge of the Dutch comes from foreign travelers, who noted heavy drinking by both men and women in the 16th and 17th centuries. But by the 19th century the Dutch had relinquished their preeminence in this field to several other European countries; in fact, pretty well all of them surpassed the Dutch in alcohol consumption by this time. (Maybe the water quality improved.)

Knife fighting in pubs was a popular sport in the early days, probably related to the penchant for booze. Bartending, we are told, was a risky occupation: bartenders had a low life-expectancy.

In 1623 tobacco use – smoking, sniffing and chewing – became widespread enough so that the government levied a tax on the product. And the moral authorities warned women not to smoke, lest it subvert their morals. Maybe, too, because it was reputed to enhance intelligence. Some Dutch women didn't want their homes reeking with smoke, so they sent their husbands out to indulge in their filthy habit elsewhere. Enterprising Dutch businessmen established special smoking parlors for the pipe-smoking crowd, sometimes with added attractions. So the warnings of the moralists were borne out.

The Artist's Family *c. 1663 by Jan Steen*

Dutch farmers were described as slow witted but steady and sure, but foreigners couldn't say enough about the neatness of Dutch farms. It's in the genes by now.

In the days of Rembrandt, men liked their women plump, bossomy and apple-cheeked, and by those standards Dutch farm girls were beauty queens. And those buxom gals loved to dance. When the fiddler is tuckered out, reported one Spaniard, that doesn't stop them; they just start singing the tunes and keep dancing till they're "besotted." So the Dutch had more than one way to get intoxicated – booze, smoking and dancing. (The writers suggest that most of this behavior was pre-Reformation, but didn't the Reformation take root at precisely this time?)

Even before the Reformation, it was noted that in Holland women, not men, wore the pants in the family, and often outside the family as well. Some even ran their own stores and businesses, which was unheard of in most other countries.

To the end of the 19th century the working week was 60-70 hours, which makes you wonder when they had time to go to the pub and do their wild dancing. There were annual or semi-annual carnivals in most towns, which had become detached from their Catholic roots and gave everyone, Catholic and Protestant, an excuse to let loose. After the Reformation, in spite of the powerful condemnations of the preachers, they apparently served as a general occasion for rowdyism and lawlessness. Or perhaps it was mostly preachers who were painting pictures of what went on at the *kermis*.

Early in the 17th century our Calvinist forefathers even tried to finish off Sinterklaas, but the children rioted in Amsterdam (1633) and Sinterklaas was saved. Not many other saints survived the Reformation.

Erasmus, who wrote *In Praise of Folly*, found plenty of reason to praise his fellow Hollanders. Some visitors described their be-

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H. Antonides, Podhoretz, and the Bush Doctrine

secular nation of Iraq, whose connection to 9/11 and al Quaeda has to this day proven non-existent, was identified as a swamp and bombed. Muslim Saudi Arabia, whose citizens comprised the majority of the 9/11 terrorists, was not targeted; apparently at the whim of the President's office.

This is the new world order; an order established and maintained at the unilateral pleasure of the person or nation possessing the largest weapons (read U.S.A.). The President will decide which of the community of nations are acting in accordance with American interests, such that they may or may not be attacked. Process, diplomacy and mediation are abandoned; the U.N. is bullied or ignored; the biggest stick rules. The strong shall inherit the earth.

The third pillar of the Bush Doctrine is the legitimacy of preemption. This doctrine allows the U.S to proactively aggress against a person or nation which it perceives to be a threat, imminent or not. Enough has been written on this doctrine so that it needs little further comment. However, this doctrine of preemptive military action, when combined with either a deliberately false political agenda, or even an honest but mistaken belief in a state of facts leading to preemptive acts of war or invasion, amounts to at least criminal negligence, and at worst, crimes against humanity. Which of these scenarios describes the U.S. invasion of Iraq is known only to the President or those close to him. It may be overly charitable to say that they were negligently mistaken. So far they have only admitted negligence. Perhaps this provides some insight into the American reluctance to subscribe to the idea of an International Criminal Court.

The fourth pillar is comprised of the first three pillars, but specifically addressed to the Palestinian/Israeli debacle. By the fourth pillar, the Palestinian leadership, and specifically, Yasir Arafat is (to use the previous metaphor) identified as a "swamp" harboring and sponsoring terrorism, and will be treated accordingly. Why the doctrine takes this turn from the general to the specific is perhaps telling, but not fully explained by Podhoretz. To suggest that it betrays a special U.S./Israeli alliance as a motivation for the new foreign policy will invite an implication if not an outright accusation by Podhoretz of an anti Jewish bias.

A very aggravating feature of the Podhoretz essay is the false characterization of the foreign policy that he espouses, as "The Bush Doctrine." As if the President of his own visionary accord, identified a new dangerous post 9/11 world order, and rose to the defense of that which is right and democratic. This idea has been debunked so often as to invite ridicule. In fact, the so-called "Bush Doctrine," with its dangerous elements of personification of evil, regime change, and preemption, has also been called the Wolfowitz Doctrine, after now Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. As far back as 1997 Wolfowitz, together with such notables as the present Vice President Dick Cheney, the present Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Norman Podhoretz himself, founded The Project for a New American Century, which espoused the very theories that are now being attributed to President Bush. This group of individuals established a roadmap towards a new century of American militarily imposed dominance, well before the events of 9/11.

Never mind the administration's spin that the invasion of Iraq was a response to the terrorism perpetrated against the World Trade Centre. And never mind that no connection has ever been established between al Quaeda, and Saddam Hussein. The invasion of Iraq, through policies of "regime change" and "preemptive strike" was expressly called for in a letter dated January 26, 1998 to then President Bill Clinton, signed by, among others, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz. This group of ideologues subsequently became the principle actors in the Bush White House and implemented an American foreign policy which has as its goal American hegemony, and as its method, the imposition of its unilateral military might. These policies are being realized before our very eyes, in spite of their worldwide unpopularity, and with increasingly dangerous results.

The world groans under the burden of this ageless militarist paradigm. Isn't it time to abandon the cycle of violence and bloodshed to embrace a more hopeful future? I am disappointed that Mr. Antonides should so eagerly and uncritically adopt the Podhoretz militarism. These old attitudes will only enlarge the circle of violence and mayhem. Even into the space beyond our planet. May God grant us mercy.

Jim Joosse,
Edmonton, Alberta

Running the race

On location: in praise of weakness

Theresa Miedema

I have a new hobby these days: running. I am in training to run the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington DC in October. A marathon is 42 kilometers (or 26.2 miles) of running. That's 42 kilometers in a row, on the same day.

In order to prepare for the marathon, I run four times per week. One of these runs is the "long run" – a run that is designed to build endurance and to prepare you, mentally and physically, for the marathon. Last week, my long run was 26 kilometers. This week, my long run will be 29 kilometers. And it only goes up from there. It takes a lot of work to prepare for a marathon!

Each Saturday morning, I wake up at 5:30 a.m. so that I can meet my running group in High Park in Toronto. We begin our runs at 7:05 a.m. sharp. Anyone who knows me well knows that I am not a morning person. That I get up so early on a Saturday morning is evidence of how seriously I am taking this running. I may not be "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed" when I arrive to run, but I am there!

Long distance running is physically painful. Training reduces the degree of pain to a certain extent and delays the onset of pain. But at some point, you will hurt. The biggest obstacle to completing a long run, however, is usually not physical pain. The biggest challenge for most runners is beating the psychological obstacles to completing a run. It is not uncommon for our brains to quit long before our bodies do. Part of our training involves learning to overcome psychological barriers to running the marathon.

Running with friends helps to keep my spirits up during a run. We talk and laugh, and the time spent running passes by quickly. But there comes a point when we are all struggling. Our coaches advise us to pick a mantra or a saying to repeat to ourselves while running to get us past the tough spots. One of my coaches says, "I am light. I am strong." Another one of my coaches envisions himself as a light bubble floating down the path. Still another repeats to herself, "I am fit. I am strong. I can do this."

I have developed mantras, too. Several of them, in fact. On Saturday mornings, after our run, we usually have breakfast together. I always have pancakes. I love pancakes. So as we begin the very last stage of each run – which is always a very steep, winding ascent up a hill – I turn to my running mates and say, "Pancakes are light. Pancakes are fluffy." One of my teammates always replies, "And they taste so good!" This is our chant as we run the last mile up the hill.

Other times, when I am running alone, the last mile or so of a run can be very difficult, especially when it is hot. As I push myself to keep up the pace for just a little bit longer, I tell myself, "courage is holding on for one more mile." Then I try to have courage. Sometimes it works. Sometimes I am left as short as the Cowardly Lion in the Wizard of Oz.

One of the best approaches that I have developed is more a prayer than a mantra. As I am running along, I repeat the words of Isaiah to myself, "Even youths grow tired and weary. Young men stumble and fall. But those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They will mount up on wings like eagles. They will run and not be weary. They will walk and not be faint."

My Dad loved this passage from Isaiah. My Dad passed away many years ago. I mostly remember my Dad as being sick: visiting him in the hospital; being quiet at home because Dad was resting; or Dad not being able to play with me because he was too tired.

My Dad did not leave my siblings and me with any memories of physical strength or achievements. He was lousy at sports. He never ran a race or played hockey. For most of my life, he was too weak to play with me even if he had been inclined to do so. But Dad did leave us with something more valuable: a picture of a man who battled his own pride and finally accepted that it was okay to rest in God's strength rather than his own. My Dad taught me that it is better to wait on the Lord than to rely on your own strength, for even youths grow tired and stumble, but those who hope in the Lord will find themselves soaring on the wings of eagles.

Our world is full of persons trying to show that they are strong and powerful. States jockey for position, rattling their sabers and building up their armies. Corporations compete fiercely for market share. All sorts of organizations lobby for money and resources and political influence.

People are caught up in the struggle for dominance, too. We compete for good grades, opportunities, popularity, jobs, promotions, and the like. We play sports, run marathons, lift weights, do pilates and yoga to get stronger, faster, better. Health care gurus offer us all sorts of ways to tap into our inner strength. We are constantly told that the power lies within each of us to make our dreams come true. We need only to dig deep enough to find the well of power within us. Everything lies within our reach.

I am all for an appropriate degree of self-confidence. But these messages that are constantly bombarded at us create too much pressure to find that inner strength and power. Moreover, they are selling illusions. Let's not kid ourselves: life is fragile and humans are weak creatures. We live in a broken world. We get sick and the power of positive thinking cannot heal us. We make mistakes and exercise poor judgement. Our "positive energy", strength of will, physical power, and overall "reach for the top" attitude may not be enough to spare us from accident, illness, mistakes, stupidity, economic recession, lost jobs, and the like.

Our world tells us to be strong. Our God tells us that it is okay to be weak. When we are weak, then we rely on God alone. Then, and only then, can God's power be manifest within us. Here is a wonderful assurance: God's power is much greater than anything the world could ever muster.

Whether we are weak or strong, whether we are out for a long run on Saturday morning or just trying to slog through the rest of the week, whether we are at home raising our children or in an office tower running a corporation, it is best to put our hope and our trust in God. Alone, we stumble and fall. With God, our weaknesses are opportunities for his grace and power to be made manifest.

As for me, I am turning a deaf ear to the world that praises strength and ridicules weakness. I would rather take the opportunity to rely on God's strength and to soar on the wings of an eagle than to trip over my own ego as I desperately search for some more strength to finish the last mile.

...cont. from p. 6

havior as making merry, but others (upper class Englishmen mostly) described it as coarseness. The Dutch were seen as large, clumsy, crude and coarse by some of these refined travelers. One attributed this to the food they ate. (Really now: cheese, herring and hutspot coarse? Perish the thought!)

The Calvinists, according to the writers, put a damper on Dutch merriment. They quote the Calvinist theologian Voetius, who said: "he who laughs a lot on earth will weep in the hereafter." But perhaps they're forgetting that there were plenty of killjoy preachers in the Middle Ages too.

Books on etiquette also considered laughter (particularly the loud, boisterous belly laugh) improper for refined company, espe-cially the company of ladies. Whatever the reason, by the end of the 18th century the Dutch had lost their international reputation for merriment. (Any connection, do you suppose, with the drop in alcohol consumption noted above?)

This loss is attributed to the influence of Calvinist preachers. But it could also be due to a general rise in affluence, with the rising middle class aspiring to be refined and decorous like the upper classes. (Upper class men reputedly only laughed heartily in brothels and out on the hunt. Never in the consistory room.) Of course, even today braying like a jackass undermines any pretence one may have to good breeding.

We are told that about 400 years ago the average marrying age was about 27 for men and 25 for women, leading to relatively small families in Holland. This is not attributed to Calvinist self-denial, however. The long postponement of connubial bliss, you may imagine, had certain side effects. Nevertheless, fewer than one percent of births were out-of-wedlock.

The authors say that although the marriage form used in the Reformed churches included an admonition to the wife to be obedient to her husband, in practice there was little incentive for her to be submissive. "Dutch women appreciated their freedom too much." Feminism, it seems, is also in the Dutch gene pool.

When the prosperity of The Netherlands declined in the early 19th century, so did morals. Out-of-wedlock births increased 500 percent. In Amsterdam, where the number of foundlings averaged about 20 per year, the number shot up to about 500 for some years, reaching 855 in 1817. But this was all following the defeat of the Dutch by Napoleon in 1795, so perhaps the Dutch were being infected by French morals. Calvinist morality made a comeback, however in the middle of the century – along with the economy.

I've just given you a nibble of what is to be found in this interesting historical overview of Dutch behavior and mores over a space of some 400 years. The book includes sections on child rearing, education, housing, furniture, food, health and church life. There are chapters on the world of work, the economy, the development of the polders and waarden, as well as history of national politics and of religion. If you're a history buff, this book is for you, but even if you're just interested in the origins of the Dutch way of life, you'll learn plenty. It's also a good resource for the school library.

The book may be ordered from John Hofstee, 770 Napier Street West, Listowel ON N4W 3S9. The price of $25.00 includes GST.

Doctrine

What's the problem with doctrine?

Arie C. Leder

How important is doctrine for contemporary church members? What role does it play in the life of their churches today? The CRCNA 2002 survey suggests the doctrinalist mind is now on the wane in that community. According to Cornel Venema neither the evangelical pietists nor the main line leaning left wish an identity for the CRCNA that would emphasize its confessional past. But you can't wish doctrine away. Like it or not, doctrine shapes the life of the church and its worship, whether you emphasize it or try to ignore it.

The Reformation and the doctrines of grace

The churches of the Reformation insisted on the doctrines of grace, especially against the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) teaching of works righteousness. Luther was right to emphasize the doctrine of justification because the church of that day needed to hear the full counsel of God, the gospel, again. The driving question was: Are we saved by our works or by grace through faith? The heirs of the Reformations have lived off the answer to that question for centuries. What about today? Is grace versus works still the theological issue of our day? Is the 21st century RCC still the great opponent? Is anyone still interested in doctrines? Should we not just love everybody, just like Jesus did?

I judge that contemporary church members are less interested in doctrine in part because our culture has to a large extent turned away from the cognitive to the affective. Morning news shows, for example, feature interviews which almost always turn on how people feel, not on what happened, how they prepared for the event in question. Similarly, the interviews of sports personalities at the recent Athens Olympic Games. This affective or therapeutic culture also impacts the church. We are a more affective, experiential, people today than a generation or two ago. It shows up in our liturgies and sermons. It's not what you say in a sermon, it's what the people experience at the moment that is important.

Whatever good and corrective reasons we may cite for increasing the affective side of worship, none includes the unimportance of doctrine. Ignorance of doctrine may be blissful for the moment. On the long run, however, it leads to spiritual deterioration and an inability to articulate reasons for the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3:15). De-emphasizing doctrine also blinds us to teachings that challenge the central truths of the gospel. What is the doctrinal challenge which confronts the church today?

The text is the problem

In an interview with the Spanish daily El País (5-01-04) British novelist David Lodge argues that the novel of the last half of the twentieth century has turned to the "life writing" genre because the skeptical reader cannot deny the truth of the author's own point of view. "As a culture we no longer believe in an omnipotent god who knows and sees everything. The novelist used to be a little like god, who knows our thoughts and who can distinguish between what is good and evil. We've lost this metaphysical certainty and the novelist goes for certainty. He knows that no one can impugn the validity of his *personal point of view*." (Emphasis added.) Lodge's next novel will likely be a historical venture, because "then you can avoid the problem of having to convince the reader that there is truth in the novel."

David J. A. Clines, of Sheffield, England, a gifted biblical scholar, appears to agree with Lodge, though very likely not for the same reasons. Arguing from a reader response point of view – the reader in a sense creates the meaning of the text given her circumstances, etc. – he suggests that it is the biblical scholar's responsibility to "market" the Bible for whatever audience is out there: literary reading, feminist, social, etc. The Bible does not have its own meaning, its own truth. Different groups reading the same text will find different truths. There is no one truth for "red and yellow, black and white."

In addition to this "personal" reading of Scripture, the 21st century reader is often one whose idea of reading length and depth is exemplified by *USA Today's* reading "bytes." In popular church culture such a reader decides meaning in the briefest of interactions with a Bible text "byte," usually in response to the question: "What do you feel the text means for you?" Church doctrine, the result of faithful readings and understandings of the text inherited from previous generations, cannot survive such an approach to Scripture. In its most radical form this use of Scripture leads to a fragmentation of the church into various interest groups, each defined by its own "personal" point of view. *Ni église, ni maître.*

Jesus teaches the doctors

The doctrine of Scripture – its authority, inspiration, and interpretation – is at stake in the reading habits Lodge and Clines describe.

The doctrine of celebrity and Scripture

The "life writing" genre, argues Lodge, has also spawned the biography of the last two decades. No, not of Napoleon or Madame Curie, but of Hollywood and Washington celebrities – flashes in the pan who can barely sign their own names. Says Lodge, "The celebrity culture is a degraded form of curiosity which gets us to read 'life writing' novels." This includes celebrity novelists. Lodge argues, for example, that Salmon Rush-die's novels would have entered an early literary grave had it not been for his celebrity status, the result of an imam's placing him on a hit list of those who have gravely offended Allah.

Celebrity culture is but one more expression of the experiential nature of contemporary culture: a prurient curiosity seeks truth rooted in celebrities' "own" true stories. This has its parallel in the church: "real life" sermons. Good preachers, we often hear, are those who tell us "their story." If it's their experience, it must be true. That true experience, it is thought, lends authority to the claims of the sermon. Not the claims of Scripture as explained by someone trained in close and faithful reading of the biblical text, but the claims of the preacher's own life experience lends credence to what it true. In a sense, the preacher's experience becomes the authoritative text for genuine religious experience.

Now what?

It's neither possible nor desirable to turn back the clock. But let's remember that one aspect of the doctrinal crisis at the time of the Reformation was defined by the phrase *sola scriptura*. Times and players may have changed, but challenges to the authority of Scripture in the life of the church remain. The reason for the challenge is as old as the temptation in the Garden of Eden: submission to an authority outside of our self-defined experience is anathema, whether that authority is human or divine. True, any human being in a particular historical and social context and with peculiar needs reads and hears Scripture uniquely. Nevertheless, none of these particulars in themselves may become the primary "text" by which to read Scripture. Scripture belongs to the church as a whole, not to any one individual or group interest; it should be read by the church as a whole in the light of its experience.

The RCC is no longer the great enemy of an orthodox doctrine of Scripture. Today it is the individual reader or group interest who form the opposition. Each a "celebrity" in their own eyes, they claim that their religious experience, personal reading of the Bible, or interest (reading Scripture as feminists, ethnic minority, from a particular sexual orientation) trumps all other readings of Scripture, including, and often especially, that of the church. The pious but in the end extremely individualistic or group interest readings of Scripture confronts the "postmodern" church with a unique challenge: how to maintain the doctrine of Scriptural authority when such authority is viewed in the culture, and increasingly in the church, as an imposition on personal choice and experience.

The CRCNA doctrine of Scripture is clearly defined in its confessions and clarified in synodical studies (1961, 1972/1973). With respect to Scripture the CRCNA confronts a pastoral not a doctrinal problem. Not Synod but the pulpit has the responsibility regularly to uncover the devastating influence of the culture on the Christian faith and the role of human experience, and specifically on the hearing and reading of Scripture. And only the pulpit has the regular opportunity to urge Christ's disciples to battle the individualism and group interests that undermine a healthy submission to the Word of the Lord.

Paul's words to Timothy are apposite: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." (2 Tim. 4:2-5)

Church

Tutu says God showed humor picking Beyers Naude to fight apartheid

Nelson Mandela conforts Dr Beyers Naude's wife Ilse. (Beeld)

Peter Fabricius

Johannesburg (ENI) – The late Rev. Beyers Naude was God's joke on the old South African regime, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu said at the funeral of the anti-apartheid cleric at the weekend.

Naude, once an establishment white Afrikaner cleric who became an anti-apartheid activist, was laid to rest in Johannesburg on Saturday. He was carried in the cheap pinewood coffin he had insisted on, but with the full regalia of a state funeral in which President Thabo Mbeki and most of his cabinet took part.

The coffin was carried by senior military officers and politicians and escorted by the presidential guard. Pupils of Beyers Naude High School in Soweto, where black students had fought against the apartheid system, met the procession. "Dr Beyers, we salute you," they sang.

Naude who died September 7 aged 89, was buried after a service at the Aasvoelkop Nederduitste Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church), the once segregated white congregation where in 1963 he denounced the role of his church in the government's racist policies.

Tutu told the large crowd, made up of the hues of the new South Africa, that Naude had been selected by the apartheid rulers for promotion to the very top of the ruling church establishment, even being admitted into the secretive Broederbond, the inner circle of Afrikaner power.

"What really gets me is the divine sense of humor," said Tutu, who himself won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his peaceful resistance to apartheid and who turned the solemn occasion into one of celebration with his own humor.

"But no one counted on God's sense of humor. Who, who, in his right mind would have chosen someone like Beyers, the embodiment of Afrikanerdom, as his weapon in the fight against the evil of apartheid [which sought to separate people by their color]?

"I would not have. You would not have. But God did," said Tutu, likening this choice to God's selection of Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of Christians, to become the disciple Paul and to have chosen David, "a well-known adulterer," as the ancestor of Jesus.

God had shown in doing so that he sides with the poor and oppressed. "He [Naude] gave the credibility of Christianity back to black people [in South Africa]," Tutu said.

Mbeki eulogised Naude as the savior of racial reconciliation. "Sacrifices he made guaranteed us our peace and reconciliation because they told those who might have sought vengeance that the Afrikaner people are not their enemies because Beyers Naude was not their enemy but their comrade, friend and leader," said Mbeki.

Dutch prime minister is sure Netherlands will remain Christian

Andreas Havinga

Amsterdam (ENI) – The Christian identity of the Netherlands is assured, the Dutch prime minister has said in a newspaper interview, while at the same time noting it is not the same type of Christian nation it was in the past.

"Even when no one goes to church anymore, that does not mean that the Christian roots are just wiped away," Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende told the Dutch daily *NRC Handelsblad* in an interview published on 11 September. "In that sense we will remain a Christian country."

The interview was published after Balkenende spoke on September 7 at the first in a series of conferences on Europe's core values in The Hague. These are an initiative of the Dutch government, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union (EU).

Public debate on national "values and norms" has raged in the Netherlands since Balkenende first raised the issue in 2002, the year he became prime minister as leader of the party that on September 19 was found to be the most popular in a national poll.

Jan Peter Balkenende

Balkenende has, however, been accused by some opponents in the Netherlands of still living in the 1950s, a time when the country was dominated by strict Christian norms. The Dutch premier, a practising Reformed Christian, is leader of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the senior partner in the coalition government.

The Netherlands has undergone rapid secularization and received large numbers of Muslim immigrants in recent decades, mainly from Turkey and Morocco. Still Christians are by far the largest religious grouping in the country and estimated to account for around 50 per cent of the country's 16 million people, while almost 40 per cent of the Dutch population profess no religious faith and over five per cent are Muslim.

Islam is part of Europe's heritage and identity, Balkenende told the newspaper. "We are talking about the soul of Europe. We are talking about our common identity as Europeans. In Europe we not only have the Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions, but also Islamic and Arab influences," he said.

"Turkey can have a positive influence on other Muslim countries in the region," said the Dutch leader who is known to favor Turkey's membership in the EU.

Balkenende spoke in support of Europe-wide multiculturalism, a policy that balances integrating new cultures while adhering to traditional ethnic identities. He rejected the newspaper's charge that this stance is diametrically opposite to the national policy pursued by his government.

Mother Teresa sisters attacked by gang of radical Hindus

Four sisters belonging to Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, three priests and their two drivers were assaulted in two attacks on Saturday, September 25 while visiting a poor neighborhood in a village near Kozhikode in northern Kerala by a mob reportedly chanting pro-Hindu slogans.

The attacks took place in the town of Pantheerankave, north of Cochin in the state of Kerala, southern India, reported Zenit, a Catholic news service. The town is a shanty-town inhabited by native Indians without caste (dalits).

The first incident occurred at midday when a group of sisters visited the town to make the usual distribution of food. Some families were asking the missionaries for help when a group of five individuals attacked their car with bars and chains, shouting Hindu nationalist slogans. Two nuns and the driver were wounded.

When another group of missionaries arrived later to help their colleagues, they were also attacked by a group of 30 to 40 individuals, some carrying iron rods. The mother superior was struck on the head, and another sister and two priests were wounded.

The fundamentalists tried to force the nuns out of their vehicle, but did not succeed. Intervention by local women kept the situation from getting worse, AsiaNews reported.

All the wounded have been hospitalized. One of the nuns is seriously ill.

The purpose of the visits by the nuns, said the superior of the order, is to help "the poorest of the poor, marginalized people, in the most absolute indigence."

We "make no distinctions of caste or creed, she explained.

Nevertheless, their work is regarded with suspicion as an attempt at conversions by Hindu radicals, said the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions.

The police have arrested nine of the assailants. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata party and other groups have denied responsibility for the attack. Nevertheless, according to the missionaries' account, "the aggressors were shouting slogans like 'long live the BJP.'"

Christian associations and movements from the whole of Kerala have issued a joint statement to express their indignation and preoccupation over the incident which they severely condemn, and defend the work of Mother Teresa's nuns, which has always been "well regarded in the whole of India."

"This is terrorising those serving the people selflessly," said Philip N. Thomas, secretary of the Kerala Council of Churches, which groups 11 Orthodox and Protestant churches.

The attack has drawn widespread condemnation in Kerala, where Christians account for 20 per cent of the state's 32 million people.

Kusamam at the hospital in Kozhikode. (AFP)

[With stories from Zenit, Assist and ENI.]

Christian Zionism and Israel in Scripture

Charles Veenstra

Christian Zionism is a dangerous movement in the United States. Since some of you may not know what it is and what it involves, I will give a brief description and then explain why it is dangerous and should not be called Christian.

The term "Christian Zionism" is used to refer to the beliefs that many Christian conservatives have which insist that the state of Israel be supported at all costs because this is a necessary condition for the return of Jesus Christ. It takes biblical passages out of context to influence political leaders to provide heavy support for Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. In fact, Christian conservatives in the United States appear to give stronger support for the state of Israel than do the Jews in our country. They support Israel because they think that when Jesus returns, Jews and others will be given the option to either convert or perish. According to an overture presented to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Christian Zionism "follows a theological approach to the Bible called 'premillennial dispensationalism,' a theme that emerged in the early 1880s and was promoted in the U.S. by the Reverend John Nelson Darby." The *Left Behind* series of novels uses this approach to misinform the public about the end times.

An excellent little book that explains this theology clearly was written by Andrew Kuyvenhoven and is entitled *The Day of the Lord*.

I am pleased that recently both the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Synod of the Reformed Church of America have taken stands against this movement called Christian Zionism.

According to the Presbyterian Church overture, "Christian Zionism fails to relate to or defend Palestinian Christians who are fleeing their homeland because of Israeli occupation, economic closures, continuing confiscation of land and settlement construction, military aggression, and now the "Wall." Christian Zionism is actually anti-evangelical in that it undermines the presence and witness of the indigenous Middle East Christians." It "creates a false image of Christianity, one that is militant, western, and Zionist."

Supporters of this movement include many current political leaders who seem to use it as a basis for foreign policy. You can hear themes of this movement in the words of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Cal Thomas. I hear no love for Palestinians coming from the mouths of these men. Instead, "Christian Zionism promotes a theology that justifies grievous violations of basic rights of people who are also made in the image of God and is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ." (overture to PCUSA)

You can find the five core beliefs of Christian Zionism described clearly on the Presbyterian website: pcusa.org. Another excellent source is a paper written by John Hubers from Orange City. It is entitled "Christian Zionism: A Historical Analysis and Critique." John is supervisor of missions to the Middle East for the RCA and wrote this paper at the time of Lent in 2004. His paper was influential in getting the Synod of the Reformed Church to adopt a position critical of Christian Zionism. You can access this paper on the RCA website: rca.org and type in Christian Zionism.

Hubers notes that Christian Zionists like Robertson and Falwell have failed to address the injustice meted out to Palestinian Arabs who were driven off their land to make way for the Jewish state. Worse still, they call on Israel to take even more land through their insistence that the Jewish state be expanded to the fullest extent of its biblical borders. Compassion and love for one's neighbor is not evident here.

According to Mr. Hubers, we need to be concerned because "Christian Zionists have consistently used their considerable political clout to attempt to block any negotiated settlement between Palestinians and Israelis that could lead to a just peace."

Second, he says, "As people who live under the divine authority of Holy Scripture, faithful disciples of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we believe that it is important that we carefully examine and, when necessary, critique, the teaching of any movement that claims to speak on Christ's behalf when there is evidence that such teaching is negatively impacting the lives of our neighbors."

Finally, he notes, Palestinian Christians are very clear that the Christian Zionism movement in America is hurting them. The number of Christians remaining in Palestine is rapidly declining because of oppression.

I ask you to listen and read critically to those who claim to speak for the Christian community. Sometimes their message is not from God. Quoting again the overture to the Presbyterian Church, "Christian Zionism is contrary to the Reformed principles of interpreting Scripture that call us to read Scripture in the light of the gospel; and to interpret Scripture in light of the one commandment of God that summarizes all other commandments, love for God and for all our neighbors."

This piece was originally written for Plumbline, a program of KDCR radio at Dordt Colllege, Iowa. Charles Veenstra is Professor of Communication at Dordt College

The surprise ... *continued from page 4*

This project is going to take some thought – and some expert advice.

Maybe I should do the carpet thing first.

That afternoon I leave the office on time so I'll have more time to devote to my homecoming project, I mean projects.

But first a couple of new tools are called for. A man is only as good as his tools, my dad used to say. No he didn't. That was some guy on television. My dad worked with a wooden plane designed by Benjamin Franklin and with bent screwdrivers that he'd used as crowbars. He had dozens of screwdrivers, most of them so badly worn, you couldn't tell whether they were Robertson or Phillips. Not that it mattered; they turned neither kind, not in or out.

Besides the tools, I'm going to have to do some cooking tonight as well, so before going to the store I make a list. Rose gave me $50 for groceries. Apples, grapes, and ... beans. I really like beans. Let's see: beans in molasses, beans in tomato sauce, barbecued beans, kidney beans, black beans, mixed beans and those pretty round ones that look like nuts. And knackwurst. Lots of knackwurst. Sugar, coffee, cream....

When I come to the checkout in the grocery store, I realize that I've forgotten the code for my bank card, and after buying my tools and stopping at Chapters Books, I only have $15 left. Embarrassed, I put everything back except my collection of beans and my Pillar's sausages. That should tide me over a couple of days. Besides, there are plenty of eggs in the fridge.

Getting home, I line up all my cans of beans in a row on my clean counters. What variety! What abundance! I already have a bowl full of tomatoes that got too ripe, some ageing hamburger from the freezer (what's a little freezer burn), and I'll chop some onions. Look, there are a few potatoes left under the sink. I'll toss them in too.

After the third or fourth can of beans, I realize that my pan, although large, is not large enough, and I turn on another burner. I feel like a pro. No recipe, no nothing – nothing but a growling stomach and a love of beans. Who says men are helpless left on their own? Going to the fridge, I look for more ingredients to add to my stew. Aha, green peppers. Cauliflower? No, that might give me gas.

It's my own Calvinist bean soup. Why Calvinist? Because it starts with total depravity and ends with perseverance.

Having gorged myself on the tastiest bean soup ever devised by wayward man – after I added a little mustard and ketchup – I find it a little difficult to get on my hands and knees to scrape at the layer of compressed underpad. It is bone hard. I felt like an archeaologist scraping off centuries of petrified sediment to get at the treasure beneath – a blond hardwood floor. This is ever so hard on the knees. I feel like Martin Luther doing penance.

The work goes a bit better, though, after I hit upon the artifice of kneeling on Rose's velour pillow while doing my dirty work.

After working in that position for about an hour, I figure it's time to do a little tile chipping. That way I can work upright for a while. If only I could get into the upright position. What's that smell? Beans? Did I turn off the stove. Aaargh! This is going to be a two-tylenol night.

As I stretch out on the floor of the family room to ease my back, I do so knowing that I won't have to fix any more meals for the rest of the week. The fridge is filled to bursting with containers full of my Calvinist bean soup. Rose's velour pillow is in the drier downstairs spinning round and round.

After I got up, I noticed that its underside was caked with that wicked underpad sediment. No matter: toss it in the wash with Rose's underwear. There was so much crud on the pillow, however, it clogged the washing machine pump. But no matter, I've already taken it apart and cleaned the little screen. When I tried to put things back together, however, some of the screws were stripped. But there's always tomorrow.

Let's see, two more days till Rose gets home. Won't she be surprised.

My those two tylenol sure made me drowsy. Let me just close my eyes for a few minutes.... Won't she be surprised....

Politics

"We stand on guard [not] for thee"

Harry Antonides

Canadians have understood through most of our history that military power is the necessary price of inhabiting a world with real enemies and real evil....
– Richard Foot, National Post, September 27, 2004

What a Shame. Our defence policies are in serious need of review. And until reforms are implemented, our military will be at risk of losing its best and brightest.
– Major-General Lewis MacKenzie (ret.), National Post, Sept. 2, 2004

Many of the senior readers of this publication have fond memories of the Canadian army's part in the liberation of Europe. It was the Canadian army that fought its way into the northwestern corner of continental Europe after landing on Normandy's beaches on June 6, 1944. Canadian soldiers were jubilantly welcomed in the Dutch villages and cities with the completion of the liberation in May, 1945.

You had to have been there (I was) to sense the depth of elation and the gratitude for the Canadian liberators. The many graveyards in the Netherlands are mute testimony of the ultimate sacrifice of Canadian soldiers. The Dutch will not forget the unpayable debt they owe to Canada and its W.W.II warriors. (More than 115,000 Canadian military have been killed overseas, most of them in the two World Wars.)

Canada's contribution to the defeat of the Nazi war machine that rolled over Europe was astounding. With a population of 11 million it managed to raise a military force of 1.1 million. By the war's end it had the world's third largest navy, and the fourth largest air force. Canada was a force to be reckoned with and a major player on the international scene.

A story of neglect

But that was then, and this is now. The story of Canada's military since the end of World War II is not pretty. Who has not heard the countless anecdotes of failing 40-year-old equipment and of thinly stretched and stressed out military personnel? Here is just one stark example of political mismanagement.

Prior to its defeat in 1994, the Mulrony government had signed a contract to replace the Canadian Armed Forces fleet of 30-year-old helicopters. One of the first decisions of the newly installed Chretien government was to cancel this contract. This politically-inspired decision, allegedly motivated by cost-saving consideration, cost Canadian taxpayers $500 million in penalties.

What is even worse is the added risk imposed on helicopter pilots and crews who have to operate aged machines prone to break down. Ten years have gone by. The process of acquiring new helicopters appears to be winding its tortuous way to a conclusion, accompanied by recriminations of more political interference and mismanagement.

The now retired Major-General Lewis Mackenzie, after serving 36 years in the Canadian Armed Forces, has been an outspoken critic of government defence policies. In December 2002 he described the Canadian military as "a bankruptcy in progress."

The Chretien government dismissed Mackenzie's call for added funds and resources, as well as similar recommendations from members of his own government, as self-serving pleadings from the arms industry.

THE EXTENT OF CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE US'S NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEM...
DUCK, SAMMY, DUCK!
Ottawa Citizen
Caglecartoons.com

Who are the culprits?

Professor J.L Granatstein is a Distinguished Research Professor of History Emeritus at York University in Toronto and has written extensively about Canada' participation in the wars of the past century. His most recent book, *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* (Harper Collins) provides a detailed account of how the Canadian Armed Forces arrived at what Lewis Mackenzie called an "entire miserable state of affairs."

Granatstein minces no words in fixing blame. Not for him the ambiguity and nuances of polite diplomacy. You might say that he takes no prisoners – rhetorically speaking. He writes that all the prime ministers since Lester B. Pearson killed the Canadian military. But he also makes a number of sensible and practical recommendation to fix what is broken.

One of the sacred tenets of contemporary correct thought is the belief that Canada's military is best suited for peacekeeping not for waging war. This assumption began to take hold after Canada's Secretary of State Lester Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in UN's first major peacekeeping operation during the Suez Crisis in 1956.

Granatstein has no objection to peacekeeping, but he thinks that in a dangerous world an army needs to be capable of fighting wars, which requires superb training, equipment and sufficient numbers. He argues that our active involvement in a number of major wars, including the two World Wars, belies the new emphasis. In short, he thinks that the emphasis on peacekeeping, especially when coupled to the "soft power" approach of the former Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy is a "fatal distraction."

He writes that this approach has had "a devastating effect" on the Canadian military, with the result that a combination of "a compliant public and the eager politicians they elect have run the military into the ground, all the while prattling about peacekeeping as the most important role for the Canadian forces."

Prime Minister John Diefenbaker (1957-63) had the misfortune to cope with the issue of nuclear weapons and Canada's defence alliance with the U.S. The Cuban Crisis (1961) happened on his watch. He did not shine during this dangerous standoff, and his waffling about Canada's role vis-à-vis the U.S. caused a lot of hard feelings on the U.S. side. Granatstein thinks that our relationship with the U.S. requires a neat balancing act, something that John Diefenbaker, and Jean Chretien after him, got "hopelessly wrong."

The Pearson years (1963-68) were trying years for the Canadian military. Paul Hellyer, the new Minister of Defence was a take-charge person who undertook a major unification project of all three services, renamed the Canadian Armed Forces. It resulted in some sensible savings and efficiencies but at high cost in morale among the officers and enlisted men and women.

Prime Minster Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968-84, interrupted by a brief interlude during Joe Clark's ill-fated regime in 1979), more than any other politician, was a catalyst for radical change in the country.

Granatstein calls Trudeau "the most intelligent Prime Minister of the modern era ... [who] had not the slightest interest in or appreciation of the Canadian Forces. His indifference and his anti-military attitudes typified the views of most Canadiens and a great many Canadians." Thus Granatstein concludes: "Over sixteen years in power, he succeeded in making the Canadian Forces as weak and irrelevant as he left Canadian foreign policy."

The nine years of Mulroney's prime ministership beginning in 1984, at first appeared promising for the military. Mulroney pledged to increase the military budget and manpower, but then concern about large deficits took over, and defence spending was cut back again. The 1987 White Paper on defence policy contained more promises of better days to come, but instead there were more cutbacks and disappointments. Granatstein writes that Mulroney raised the military's hopes repeatedly "but failed to deliver."

The chapter about Prime Minister Jean Chretien is tellingly called "Last Rites." This is how Granatstein grades this administration:

" Chretien's Liberal regime had handled defence questions shamefully in its nearly eleven years in power, and virtually all the unhappy trends of the last half-century came to their apogee during his time in office. He failed to fund the Canadian Forces adequately, ran down its strength, and allowed major weapons systems to fall into obsolescence, often at risk to the soldiers, sailors, and aircrew who operated them. He let down Canada's major ally and practised anti-Americanism as policy in ways that had not been seen since John Diefenbaker held power four decades ago. He and his ministers pandered to neutralist sentiments, not least in Quebec. He continued to lust after kudos at the United Nations, and his government used Canada's fighting personnel to the point of exhaustion."

A new vision?

In the final chapter, "The Way Ahead: Resurrecting the Canadian Military," Granatstein lists a number of specific suggestions needed to turn around long-term policies that have come perilously close to making the Canadian Armed Forces irrelevant. It will require in the first place the determination among our political leadership to devote a great deal more resources to the military.

I want to emphasize that the men and women in the Canadian military are serving with distinction while being under-appreciated and overworked. They are known for their professionalism and dedication and for doing a superb job, as they have again shown in Afghanistan. They are putting their lives on the line in many dangerous trouble spots, while coping as best they can with the failure of their political masters to give them the recognition and resources they deserve.

Granatstein realizes that Canada will not have a Cadillac military. His suggestions in my view are reasonable and practical. But since we have fallen behind so far by

Continued on page 12...

Short story

My summer vacation photo album

Ron de Boer

Friday

10:00 a.m. Here we are on Friday packing the van for our weekend away to Creekwood Christian Lodge where my parents have a permanent trailer. That's me putting my trusted cell phone with the text-messaging feature for all my important emails in a prominent place under my seat.

10:05 a.m. Here's a picture of the girls watching television while we pack the van. The older ones don't know how in the world they'll get along without their decorating shows and the Saturday WNBA game for an ENTIRE weekend. They think they will die if they are not able to chat with their friends on the internet for three whole days. Come on, I tell them. Don't let technology rule you. I don't tell them I'm bringing my cell phone.

11:00 a.m. Here's a picture of us driving to Creekwood. That's me talking on my cell phone to the guy who's running my basketball practice tonight. If you look closely, you can see Karen's glaring face in the reflection of the windshield. She is threatening to throw my cell phone out the window.

2:00 p.m. Here we are arriving at Creekwood Christian Lodge. That's me chatting with the blond-haired girl at the check-in window. She is pointing into the woods through which I am to drive to our campsite. "It's in the valley," she says. "As in the shadow of death?" I quip. "Only if we hear that cell phone go off after hours," she says pointing to my Sony Ericcson on the dash. Sheepishly, I put the cell phone under my seat – but I leave the power on.

2:15 p.m. Here we are unloading the van. That's me heaving out the tents and coolers and sleeping bags. In the background you can see Karen and the kids searching for the perfect position for our tents.

2:25 p.m. Here I am sitting on the cooler starting the beach novel I've brought with me. In the background you can see Karen and the kids searching for the perfect position for our tents.

2:45 p.m. Here I am sneaking a pop tart from the cooler. In the background you can see Karen and the kids still searching for the perfect position for our tents.

3:00 p.m. See that lump in the middle of the flat nylon tent? That's me trying to slip the tent poles through the correct hole so we can have a canopy.

3:10 p.m. We took this picture of my thumb after the accident while pounding in the third tent peg. My mind had wandered back to my cell phone – had I received any important emails in the last four hours? – when-whaam! – the hammer said hi to my thumb. You can see Karen's shadow hunched over laughing in the background.

4: 00 p.m. Here's a picture of our campsite all set up. As you can see, there are no other tents or trailers in the valley. Karen thinks the kids must have been screaming in the background when she made the phone reservation weeks before. We've been sequestered from the other campers.

4: 15 p.m. Here are the railway tie stairs leading out of the valley and up to the main campground at Creekwood. When you get to the top, you must be careful to watch out for the most dangerous wildlife at Creekwood Christian Lodge. They are fast moving things with hard shells of many colors – little blond kids on bicycles! Like mosquitoes, they're everywhere, and the blond pony-tailed girl at the store – once a Lakewood bike-gnat herself, I'll bet – says there is no giant can of spray to keep them away.

6:00 p.m. Here we are arriving at my parents' trailer. There's Grandpa on the deck reading his third newspaper of the day. See the outline of Grandma through the window? That's her fussing over coffee and a plate of windmill cookies for the kids. When Dad's done reading the obituaries and Mom has stirred the Coffee Mate powder into our coffee, they go over the campground rules with us. Not too noisy – folks go to bed early in these parts. Careful with the Frisbees on Senior's night. No hiding your beer in coke cans this year. Church is at the Creekwood community center on Sunday morning – attendance is mandatory or you don't get any more ice and fire wood from the store.

8: 30 p.m. That's us sitting around the fire at dusk roasting marshmallows for our 'smores. That's me blowing out yet another flaming marshmallow for the six-year-old. Note Grandpa's singed eye brows from monkeying around with the logs in the fire too much.

9:00 p.m. Here we are in a group photo with all of Grandpa and Grandma's trailer park neighbors who have happened by on a walk and wondered what all the laughing was about. Sure they'll sit for a spell, they say.

10:00 p.m. Here we are back at the campsite saying good night to the thirteen and fifteen year-olds who now have their own tent.

10:05 p.m. Here I am tossing around sleeping bags, pillows and air mattresses in search of the spider that incited a 10:04 scream-in-stereo from both teen queens that surely scared the raccoons back up their trees. See my silhouette being illuminated by the frantic beams of flashlights slicing through the air at the ends of the teen queens' arms?

10:25 p.m. Here I am sitting in the van checking my text messaging on the cell phone. I've managed to go twelve hours without checking my email. I'm hoping to ween myself from technology by Saturday afternoon.

10: 40 p.m. That's me looking up at the Milky Way and the Big Dipper in the ink black sky one can see only while camping. It's easy feeling close to God when the cell phone's turned off, the internet is hours away by car and you're staring straight up into space.

10: 41 p.m. That's me searching in the van for my cell phone again to make sure it's turned on.

1:30 a.m. That's the skunk and the raccoon wrestling/mating/practising gymnastics with our tea pot on the picnic table. If you look carefully, you can see a bony shadow in its underwear holding up a camera. That's me in the light of a full moon.

Saturday

7: 30 a.m. That's me shaving in the Creekwood public washroom. That's Gerrit two sinks over attempting to slick back his twenty or so hairs. "You are not in farming, den, are you?" Says Gerrit – unprompted – into the mirror. "I don't think so," I mumble, swallowing a dab of shaving cream. I'm tempted to say I have a herd of wild kids. "Vee are in aaapples," says Gerrit washing his armpits with a wash cloth. "That's nice," I say, worried Gerrit is going to move south with his wash cloth. "We picked up some just up the road yesterday on our way in." "I will offer you a challenge," says Gerrit, moving one sink

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...continued from page 11

years of neglect, it will take many years to replace the worn-out and outmoded equipment of the Canadian army, navy and air force.

What are the chances that Granatstein's compelling and highly readable analysis and recommendations will be heeded? I am not very optimistic in light of the calibre of political debate in this country.

For one thing, there is a sizeable category of liberals in Canada who think that the current sad state of our military is just fine. Abetted by a vocal contingent of pacifist church leaders, they believe that we need to focus on removing the "root causes" of war, notably the huge gap between the rich and the poor nations.

Many of them are therefore convinced that even the Islamist terrorists who have declared war on the West must be met not with force of arms but with a willingness to listen to the grievances of the Arab world. That's why they look to the United Nations as the instrument for building a peaceful world. Conversely, they think that the Americans are all wrong in fighting the Islamist terrorists with military force.

It's not hard to see how we have arrived at the current state of our military, fed by the dual sentiments of anti-militarism (we are peacemakers not warmongers) and anti-Americanism. This mix is reinforced by Quebec sensitivities, all of which make for a powerful, in my view perverse, anti-military mindset.

This is of course not the whole story. Besides, there are still those who are convinced that we need to reckon with the reality that some very determined people hate us and want to do us harm. It is foolhardy to think that the horrific crimes committed against innocent citizens all over the world in the name of a hate-filled Islamism does not affect us. I fear that some day we will be in for a rude awakening.

It is my conviction that military preparedness is a given necessity in a world where evil is still rampant. And Canada has a long way to go before it raises its military to the condition needed to cope with the ugly reality of the world we now inhabit.

Granatstein has presented us with a forthright articulation of what ails the Canadian military and what is needed to restore this vital institution to robust health. It is a topic that cries out for a full-scale and honest public airing. This book is a very good place to start.

Harry Antonides
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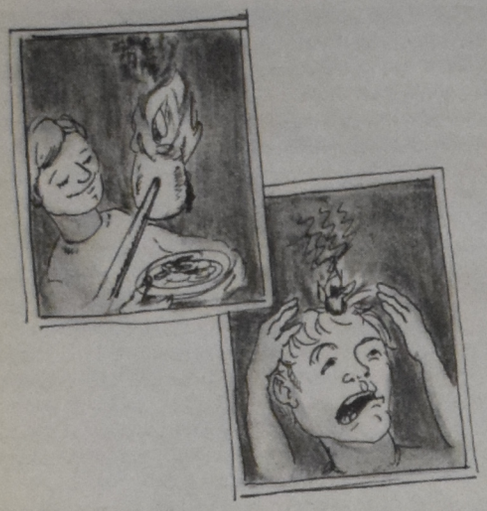
Short story/Stewardship



closer and pointing his black comb at me. "You come up with a better apple than a Vos Farm apple and I will pick a bushel with my teeth!"

7:31 a.m. That's me galloping down the railroad tie stairs back to the valley folk below. If you look carefully in the background, you can see Gerrit in the doorway of the Creekwood washroom in his hempie turning a Q-tip in his ear.

7:40 a.m. That's my backside as I search the van for my cell phone to check my text messaging. Little do I know at this point that Karen had hidden my cell phone while Gerrit was inviting me to the Great Apple Challenge.

7:41 a.m. That's me sitting at the picnic table with the shakes, suffering from email withdrawal.

10:00 a.m. Here we are all crammed into the van on our way to the beach.

10: 10 a.m. Here we are arriving with our arms full of stuff at the beach.

10: 15 a.m. Here I am blowing up the raft with my own lips. Note the blue face. Note the swollen lips. Note the impatient teenage girls waiting for me to finish breathing or drop dead from a heart attack so they can take their raft.

12: 35 p.m. Here are the teens floating on my breath in Lake Huron.

12:40 p.m. That's my head on the sand after being buried by the young ones. The six-year-old says she wants to play soccer now. Right after this picture was taken, she kicked me in the head.

12:45 p.m. Here we are sitting on the gray beach blanket eating Karen's world famous egg salad sandwiches. Note the sunburned face. Later, when I removed my sunglasses to reveal fish belly white circles around my eyes, I would catch a glimpse of the new ridiculous raccoon look I would sport for the rest of the summer.

2:15 p.m. Here we are playing Frisbee football in the water. Girls against the Guy. "Guys rule; Girls DROOOOOL," I yell as I dive for the Frisbee. The trick is I have to throw the Frisbee and catch it, which is easy since I throw it in the area where the stinging jelly fish were sighted last week. Even Karen didn't fall for that malarkey but she wasn't confident enough to venture into Jelly-land to get my Frisbee!

4: 00 p.m. Here are the Girls walking back to the van. Note the contraption of beach umbrella, lawn chairs, rolled up beach blanket and cooler walking behind them. Under that heap is my sorry, sunburned sand-down-my-shorts self.

5: 30 p.m. This is a picture of Karen and I cooking supper together on the Cole-man's stove. In the background you can see all four girls playing Frisbee. Sometime shortly after this picture was taken, my cell phone started ringing from somewhere inside the van. I let it ring.

8:00 p.m. Here is Mom and Dad descending to our valley for a campfire. There are still no other trailers or tents in the entire four acre valley. But as much as we wanted one of the campsites next to the horse shoe championships on Senior's Night, we prefer the privacy of the valley.

10:30 p.m. Here we are staring at the sky. The stars looked painted on that night. The kids are arguing with Grandpa over the location of the Big Dipper and the North Star. I am looking for satellites moving slowly across the heavens, wondering if any of them are searching for the lost signal of my lost cell phone.

Sunday

10:00 a.m. Here we are sitting on the chairs at the Creekwood Community Centre's Sunday morning service. That's the retired minister preaching a good old-fashioned fire and brimstone sermon to the nodding congregation. Sometime during that sermon, the ten-year-old will lean over to me and say, "This can't be real church – there's no Power Point presentation." Instead of a band, a guest camper has brought her accordion to accompany the congregation. The offering that week should have gone to new fly strips. I whacked fifteen or so to death during the congregational prayer alone.

11:30 a.m. Here we are for Sunday morning coffee at Mom and Dad's trailer. It is their 47th wedding anniversary. We make the usual jokes about our oldest brother being 47 ½ years old (he's really 45) then sip caffeine to their good health and long years.

1:30 p.m. Here we are packing up the van again. You can see the flattened grass where our tents were. This makes the ten-year-old sad. She makes us promise we'll come back. If Grandpa and Grandma are here again next year, we tell her.

1:35 p.m. Here we are about to turn onto the highway home. It's right about here that Karen will hand me my cell phone back. The little window on my phone says, "You've got Mail!" In my rear view mirror, the Creekwood Campground sign grows smaller. I click off my cell phone and listen to the kids talk about what a great time they had with each other and their grandparents.

Gifted by God: my talents

Ever wish you were gifted with the skills and abilities so evident in others? Even though we're all created in God's image (Gen. 1:27) we have differing sets of talents (skills, abilities, aptitudes). Some of us may feel like the one-talented servant in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30): God didn't give me much to work with – so what's the use? But God doesn't measure by another's standard, rather he expects each one of us to use the abilities that God has given to make a difference in his kingdom (Luke 12:48b).

The apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (chapter 12), painted a picture of the church like a body. The point, I believe Paul is making, is that all the various parts of the body are important, so everyone in the church is important even though some may seem to be more important then others i.e., the Pastor, the elders. It's not the importance that matters; what matters is that all the parts are doing their best.

In the parable of the talents, the master in the parable entrusts his servants with different amounts of money before he goes on a long journey. When he comes back, the master asks for an account from each of the servants to determine how they managed these resources and he rewarded faithfulness. Just like the master in the parable, God expects us to use all our abilities to their best and he wants to reward our faithfulness in life.

We can take comfort that God's expectation is in step with our ability and that faithfulness is rewarded. We are not to be jealous or disheartened when someone has more gifts than we do. God is not unfair, so let us be content and strive to use all that God has given us to the best of our ability. The secret to contentment is working within and developing the specific 'gift set' that God has entrusted to each of us.

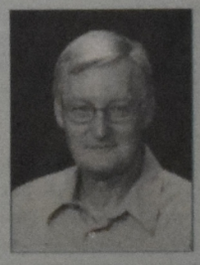
Being content with what God has entrusted to us is the key to thanksgiving. This Thanksgiving Day don't forget to thank God for all the 'talents' he has entrusted to you!

Stewardly Tip

Discover your gifts: get tested. Awareness is the first step in developing all of our God given skills (physical and spiritual), abilities and aptitudes. We do well to discover our gifts by using personal survey instruments that help us understand ourselves better. Once you know, consider what and how you will develop what God has given you – set some goals and draft a plan.

Readers: We want to share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can do our part to make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Please write or email Rick or visit the *CC* website. Please leave your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or, if we need to, we can ask you for more details.

Next issue:
Gifted by God: my trees



Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario
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The Lord's Prayer

Give us today our daily bread

J.H. Sillevis Smitt
Translated by Jack Van Meggelen

The Gleaners *by Jean-Francois Millet*

Our Christian faith does not exist in some ethereal never-never-land, far from any worldly reality. It is grounded firmly in the here and now. This may sound like a platitude, but it is absolute reality.

I called it 'our Christian faith' rather than 'the Christian religion,' or 'Christianity.'

Nietzsche once accused Christians of not being true to the earth, and he was right in saying that. He was reacting fiercely to the world-flight position of so many Christian groups.

I think that throughout the ages, nothing has been as detrimental to the advance of the gospel as the recurring tendency of Christians to take a world-flight attitude in their lives and confessions. The attempt to make a Sunday religion out of their faith is a recurrent weakness of those who profess to be Christian. This seems pious but is, in fact, very unspiritual. Jesus came into the midst of humanity and worked and taught in the marketplace among the people. He confronted sin and its consequences and began to build the beginnings of a new and holy community right in front of people's eyes.

The Gospel never stops at promising only a new heaven. It also urges us to work with all our might towards the coming of the new kingdom on earth.

Throughout the history of the church various disobedient responses to the Gospel have sprung up. In mysticism people wander around in a sentimental, surreal fog; legalism produces self-righteous attitudes; and discussing doctrine becomes the end-all for people busy contemplating the meaning of things.

However, Jesus did not come to teach us such methods nor to reflect on the meaning of our existence. He came to heal and to set free this terribly disfigured and cruelly maimed world.

That is why the Christian who has understood anything about our Savior can never flee from this world. The Christian stands firmly in the middle of life; and in a world full of moralizers and pompous talkers, wants to work as a builder in the kingdom of God.

Life with Christ is a most natural life. If you ask me what Jesus came to do I would say this: he came to transform this greedy, selfish, barbaric human race back into genuine human beings: ordinary, loving, honest, God-fearing people. God's grace has only one objective, to restore us to who we were meant to be in the first place.

That is also why if something is not 'natural' it is not Christian, even if it calls itself Christian.

People living without God are actually 'unnatural' beings, puffed up or uncontrolled. Sometimes both. But people who have found God prove the newness of their life in Christ by becoming normal, natural persons.

Natural human life is attacked on two fronts. Physical ailments and shortcomings threaten our health and even our lives; spiritual and moral shortcomings produce sin.

Both these afflictions are covered by this petition. First: *"Give us this day our daily bread"* covers all our physical needs with a blessing. "*And forgive us our debts*" promises to bless with grace the poverty of our spirit, our soul. In this way the Lord's Prayer covers all our needs both for the body and the soul.

All things have their proper order.

The Lord's Prayer has three petitions that begin with *"Your,"* followed three times by *"us."* First God, then us. Only when we have placed God's will first, will we be able to find our own proper position. Poverty and remorse, shortages and sins can only be removed if and when the relationship with God has been restored. Abundance and righteousness will become our share when God has been restored as king in our life. Poverty and remorse disappear when our will is broken and God's will reigns.

Give us this day our daily bread.

I am so thankful that Jesus included these words in the Lord's Prayer. We may go to God for our next meal. That's how important our physical bodies are. At various times in the history of Christianity the importance of the body has been contradicted or denied. However, our body is not a disgrace nor does it belong to a lower order but only a different order from the spiritual. Both the physical and the spiritual were created through the will of the same God.

It's not that we *have* a body; we *are*, body and soul, inseparably one person. The whole spiritual side of us is inseparable from the body, and a healthy spirituality cannot flourish if we deny or neglect our bodies. Our bodies, and our male and female roles, and the way they are complementary to each other is an expression of God's image in us. In praying these words we are invited to come to God for all our physical bodily needs, because our whole physical side has suffered and is damaged, sold out under the power of sin. Jesus said, "You may ask your father in heaven for a bagged lunch."

What he wants to say is that there is nothing that you cannot bring in prayer to your heavenly father. You may ask him for shoes and a winter coat; for a room and a bed; for a job and a vacation; you may tell him about your need for a life partner, or your longing to have a child. You may point out your pain and oppressive suffocating feelings. You may show him your empty wallet and depleted bank account; your empty larder and your exhausted stores. You may tell him about the cost of living and your unrewarding work. I could go on and on about all the things you may tell your father in heaven. Everything, all the time.

God is not a God who is far away and a stranger, high up in his distant heaven. Not at all. He is a God who is near, a God who shares our joys and sorrows and who wishes to provide for all our needs. There is no hunger he cannot satisfy and no thirst he cannot quench.

With this petition Jesus brings God right into our living room and our workplace. Our faith is not for

Sundays only. Our God is a God for every day and every need. Not just a God we meet in church, but a God who is in our living room, the market place, the army barracks and the ships on the high sea.

Give us this day our daily bread. When Jesus spoke these words he was speaking to ordinary farmers and fishermen, sandal makers and carpenters – all people who had to work hard for their living. Jesus knew the fear of failure and not having food tomorrow. In our western world we know very little of the anxious poverty that so many people in third world countries face daily. In many parts of the world people never have enough to eat; they don't know what it means to be satisfied. Jesus knows about scarcity, and therefore he knows about our fear of running out of things to eat. And he says, "Don't be afraid, come with all your needs to your Father in heaven." Place them in his strong, caring, fatherly hand... You are safe with him.

This petition places us in the middle of normal everyday living. Except that normal is not always 'normal'. Sometimes it is the opposite: abnormally hard for very many. Living can become a tough battle in an unforgiving and harsh environment; a back-breaking struggle on a parched piece of land which reluctantly provides some basic staples, and then only when people struggle in the sweat of their brow. Equally devastating is any economic competition which operates without consideration for its victims. Some will gladly work hard with great enthusiasm to prevent others from living peaceful, contented lives. Many of us are not very compassionate when our comfort is threatened.

Jesus not only knows our deepest fears, he also knows our ever present covetousness.

Our daily needs are always precarious. On this earth any rather minor event can result in devastation. Any climatic change can lead to major crop failures or cause death to thousands in floods or storms. A shift in the jet stream causes major changes in agricultural productivity and economic viability.

In our complex world economy there is another problem. Small variations in the economic barometer may put tens of thousands of people out of work.

Jesus knew that too, and his simple audience from an agrarian society experienced the same uncertainties that we face today. Just think of the hirelings waiting in the marketplace for day labor jobs. We are not independent one from another. Rather, we are very much interdependent, extremely vulnerable and ultimately weak. That is why whenever we pray, *"give us this day our daily bread,"* we are expressing our deep and constant dependence on God for all our needs.

"Father I am so terribly dependent, I am unable to stand my own ground. I am dependent on many others, but most of all I am dependent on you my Father in heaven. Life is from you and through you. I cannot live without you, even for a day."

It is very healthy and fruitful for us to stop and think about this prayer for a little while. In days of peace and prosperity we so easily accept it as normal that we can buy what we want, and eat as we please. Jesus wants us to know that we are like children and completely dependent on him for all our needs.

Is it easy or difficult to pray this?

We have already seen that no petition of the Lord's Prayer can be prayed honestly from the heart, unless we are prepared to surrender our egos. At first it may seem that this petition contradicts that idea. It seems easy and quick to say, *give us today our daily bread*, but that is not true. It shows once again how important it is for us to weigh each petition carefully. When you really think it through you will come to the realization that this petition of the Lord's Prayer is possibly the most difficult of all.

Who asks for bread? Beggars, right? Do you think it fun to become a beggar? To give is not easy for us; but – to receive is even more difficult, and to ask is most difficult of all. The poorer we are the more difficult it is to ask, because asking is an acknowledgement of our own failure and insignificance.

This first word *give* does not flow naturally over our lips. Are you becoming aware now that it is not so easy to pray this request? And there is still more. When we pray for *our daily bread,* we actually pray against having any riches, any surplus. When we pray this petition earnestly we are actually giving up any longing for riches and desire for comforts. Are you prepared to do that?

Whenever I say, *give* I'm really saying, " I don't have it, and I don't expect it from my own efforts."

I have often thought about John D. Rockefeller, in his time the richest man on earth. During the later years of his life he looked like a living mummy because he had a critical stomach ailment. He had all the money in the world but an appetite for only a few tea biscuits soaked in milk. It reminds me of Jesus' words in Luke, "Then [the rich man] said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'" Even the very rich can only eat if God grants them health and an appetite.

However, you do not have to be a billionaire to suffer from the delusion of self-sufficiency.

Most people have a hard time freeing themselves from the thrall of money and position, and from the anxiety of securing their goods. Who of us is truly free from dependence on things, money, possessions and the praise of others?

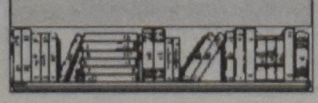
In this petition Jesus wants to teach us that, though we should not deny that we need each other, we are ultimately totally dependent on our heavenly Father. That is why Jesus teaches rich and poor alike, without any distinction, to come humbly before God and ask, *"Our Father,... give us this day our daily bread."*

NOTE:

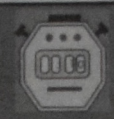
the Series on the Lord's Prayer can be accessed on our website:

christiancourier.ca
*(Click on **Feature Articles**)*

and
Arie Leder's series at
CRConnect.com



After the Buzzer



Tim Antonides

On being tired

I had a lot of hopes for the hockey season this year. I was excited about seeing the Canucks come back madder and better. I was looking forward to watching Bertuzzi put his career back together. Now that I've moved downtown, I was pumped up about walking a few blocks to the game instead of making the long drive in traffic.

As we now know, none of this will happen. We'll have to entertain ourselves some other way. In fact, some good might come out of it. Husbands and wives might just get to see each other on Saturday nights. Money that might otherwise be spent on beer and NHL hockey tickets might instead be spent more wisely – on beer and junior hockey tickets.

I just want my hockey back

There's something about billionaires arguing with millionaires over money that makes even the most iron stomach turn. It's hard to plough through all the angles that exist on the subject. One teacher on our staff insists that the owners are at fault. A hardcore capitalist, he figures that the market should determine what salaries the players get – not some negotiated salary cap. It seems that a majority of the public, though, blames the players for being greedy and inflexible. Personally, I don't know where to start placing the blame and I don't really care whose fault it is. I just want my hockey back.

Which leaves a larger question unanswered. At what point does a person say that enough's enough and decide that the whole thing has become too outrageous? The fellow teacher I mentioned argued convincingly that it's really the fans' fault for putting up with the present hockey system for so long. Like a customer who refuses to shop at a certain store because of some questionable overseas labor practice, maybe we should be walking away from the game and refusing to participate unless the cost and extravagance of the experience becomes more sensible. After all, there's something seriously wrong when the average Joe in Toronto can't even get a Leafs ticket (let alone afford one) because a bunch of three-chinned, corporate captains of industry buy them in bulk to entertain clients.

A good part of our Christian experience (the Reformed one, in particular) is spent working in and dealing with broken organizations, trying our best to find and promote redemption. As a teacher, I deal with brokenness all the time – damaged families, kids with learning disabilities, childhood depression. It was nice to go to the arena and just enjoy an exciting game of hockey. There was nothing complicated about the actual game. Now that's busted too, and I find myself strangely unable to muster the strength to even analyze or debate the current "labor" situation.

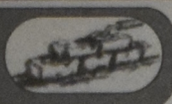
I guess what I'm trying to say in a roundabout way is that it's sometimes exhausting to come to terms with how much of a broken world we live in. We're meant to wait patiently for the Lord and listen for his voice amid the buzz of the culture, but sometimes it's just a lot of work. There's a sign in our staff bathroom with a quote by Ernest Holmen: "Today I live in the quiet, joyous expectation of good." Although I hate trite platitudes, I like that one. It acknowledges a broken world that still contains beauty and purity.

When hockey returns, I will watch it. I will once again let it ooze through my pores, and I will celebrate it. Like a moth to flame. I will again find the good in it....

Tim Antonides is back to teaching and coaching at Surrey Christian School after spending a summer in Lithuania.

Life changes

BuildingTrust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Divorce and grace

Vicky van Andel

By the time Sharon and David started the process of ending their marriage they felt withdrawn, anxious and lonely. Too much has happened to explain to other people. When they try to tell their story, it sounds confusing. It's hard to know where to begin. This is the situation many divorcing people find themselves in when they start separation proceedings.

For communities, divorce is a very hard thing. People have a hard time dealing with divorce. It is complicated and often messy. By the time divorce happens a lot of water has passed under the bridge for a long time. As community members we become overwhelmed by the complexities of divorce and over time prefer or are inclined to, take distance from it. We withdraw.

Divorce is a word that makes us feel uncomfortable. It is painful to talk about. It is too ambiguous. Divorce is also not right. It isn't supposed to happen in a Christian community. Yet it does, and quite often. How do we put that together?

Divorce is a complete breakdown of a once loving relationship between two people. The process starts when it becomes clear the problems between two married people cannot be overcome. It also has many consequences, often meaning that one parent has to live separately from the children. As well, it involves complicated financial arrangements. Almost always it means having to negotiate a lot of conflict. Divorce tends to be a complete relational disconnect. It is devastating and emotionally exhausting.

As a community, how do we support people going through a divorce? We often try, but find it hard. It soon becomes clear that we can't support both people at the same time, no matter how much we would like to. It becomes too stressful to balance the emotional needs of both people. So friends, community members, and parents start having to take sides. This cuts the social network of the couple in half. And so the division in the relationship carries over into the community. Taking sides or taking distance, both take its toll on everyone.

Divorce is a road no one chooses to walk. This is in contrast to comments we sometimes hear such as: it is too easy to get divorced these days, people don't want to commit anymore, and people are selfish. None of this is true in our Christian community. Divorce happens to imperfect people living in an imperfect world. It is a result of sin, in the same way that all human suffering is the result of sin. The comfort we have is that we are forgiven.

By the time the church community hears about a divorce, the couple has struggled for a long time. They know their world is falling apart. They fear people's judgment, questions and solutions. To protect themselves they tend to keep people at a safe distance, sometimes deciding to go to church elsewhere, or not attending church at all.

Divorce is a life experience that transforms people. A personal transformation is never planned. It happens to people. When it hits us we are forced to travel a difficult journey. And there is no way around it but to go through it. It happens when our lives run stuck and we hit a cement wall and discover that our beliefs no longer jive with our reality. We are on this transformational journey when we know we are forced to do something different from what we are doing in order to be able to move on with our lives. While most of us are spared the pain of divorce, most of us do encounter transformational experiences in our lives. We have that in common with divorced people.

In my readings on transformational experiences I learned that the road of inner transformation does have some identifiable steps. There are stages to these experiences. They can be identified as: dissolving, imagining, reforming, and beginning anew.

Dissolving is the most difficult part of the journey. In this stage we find ourselves struggling to maintain some sense of control in the face of the brutal awareness that our lives are falling apart. We have a feeling that we are losing everyone and everything. This is a very emotionally exhausting time.

After that comes the imagining stage. We slowly start to see a light at the end of the tunnel. We begin to see a possibility of a new future, though we don't know yet where it leads. We also begin to understand what might have gone wrong. This is a time of reflection.

Then we move into the reforming stage. It happens when we begin to dream about a different future and dare to explore new ideas. We still have many doubts though, and backtrack a lot. By the time we feel ready to take on a new life we have reached the fourth stage. We are slowly able to let go and find courage to move ahead.

Given this breakdown of the transformational experience of divorce, how do we respond to people going through a divorce? We can do this by knowing that the individual people have suffered terribly. By knowing they are fragile and vulnerable (knowing means not by asking). By acting out of this knowing and reaching out and offering support. By expecting to find the couple somewhere in one of the stages of transformation. By listening non-judgmentally. The major fear people going through a divorce have is the judgment of other people. Their self judgment is enough.

The art of reaching out to divorced people lies in our ability to transcend our own hesitations and fears, and in our courage to embrace them unconditionally.

One of my friends once said: "We can choose to live out of the love of the law or we can choose to live out of the love of grace. I have chosen to live out of the love of grace." She is a wise woman.

I have not experienced divorce personally, but I have walked closely with people who have. I have had transformational experiences in my life. They have been painful. Most of us are confronted with a life transforming experience at one time or another. Grief can be a transformational experience. A move away from home can be such an experience. Growing up tends to be one. Our faith journey can be transformational. All these experiences equip us to empathetically support divorcing people. Let's claim what we know and apply it in love.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970, or e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net

A little gratitude goes a long way

Lisa M. Petsche

"If the only prayer you ever say is 'Thank you,' it will be enough."
– Meister Eckhart, Christian scholar

If I had to pick a favorite season, it would be autumn – this time of transition from the energizing lightness of summer to the cozy "down-to-earthness" of winter. In addition to its moderate temperatures, I especially enjoy its vibrant colors and celebrating Thanksgiving Day.

A relatively (and refreshingly) non-commercialized observance, Thanksgiving encourages us to reflect upon our blessings and give thanks to God, the ultimate source of all that is good. Of course, we shouldn't limit this exercise to once a year, but life's daily demands and inevitable challenges tend to sidetrack us.

In today's culture of overachievement, hyperconsumerism and instant gratification, we need Thanksgiving more than ever, to nudge us out of our frenzied, future-oriented and often self-absorbed lifestyle. It helps us focus on the abundance in our life, which we typically overlook.

When prompted, though, most of us can identify numerous blessings, big and small. Basics may include faith, family, friends, pets, food, water, home, employment, health, abilities, talents, opportunities, conveniences of modern North American life such as electricity and indoor plumbing, public health and welfare services, a peaceful and economically thriving homeland and the wonders of nature.

Thanksgiving is also a good time to reflect on our stewardship of these gifts. That is, are we optimizing them in ways that glorify God and build his kingdom here on Earth?

For example, do we make ongoing efforts to nurture our faith through prayer, spiritual reading, attending retreats and participating in church programs?

Are relationships a top priority, or in practice do they end up relatively low on our lengthy "to do" lists? Specifically, how much time do we regularly spend with loved ones? Do we give them undivided attention and affection, and express appreciation? Do we treat others with whom we come in contact with respect and compassion?

Is our home a haven – an inviting, peaceful place – or do clutter and chaos prevail?

Do we appreciate our job as a source of income, if not fulfillment, and perform it with integrity? Or do we look for ways to cut corners, resist change or regularly complain about our coworkers, bosses and wages?

Do we guard our physical and mental health, getting adequate nutrition, exercise and sleep, scheduling regular medical checkups, finding healthy outlets for stress and making time for relaxation? Or is self-care a low – or non-existent – priority?

Do we limit possessions to things we need or intend to cherish, avoiding impulse buying and status-driven purchases? Do we take care of what we own, careful to use, store and maintain it properly? When we no longer need or want something, do we toss it in the garbage, or do we see if it can be used by someone else or recycled?

Do we help preserve the beauty of nature by avoiding littering or otherwise disturbing natural spaces? Do we conserve water and energy, and practice the three R's – reduce, reuse, recycle – with material goods?

Do we get involved in social justice causes, so that all people may have a fair share of Earth's abundant resources?

Do we begin each day with a sense of anticipation, or anxiety? Do we use our time – a fundamental but all-too-finite resource – carefully and purposefully, setting priorities and doing our best to maintain balance in our lives? (If you suffer from time stress, go online to www.timeday.org to learn about upcoming Take Back Your Time Day – October 24 – aimed at challenging the North American "epidemic of overwork, overscheduling and time famine.")

One of the wonderful things about cultivating an attitude of gratitude is that it eventually creates a desire to share our time, talent and treasure – with people we know as well as those we don't.

Even a little gratitude goes a long way in transforming our corner of the world – and possibly beyond.

A simple but sincere "Thank you," offered to our Creator, is all it takes to set this kingdom-building process in motion.

Opinion

Ontario Hydro, Bell Canada and running out of wind

Private Enterprise is more efficient. Right? Wrong. Lately I've had some bad experiences with two of Canada's largest enterprises: Bell Canada and Hydro One.

First, my travails with our highly indebted electricity provider. A few weeks ago I was in Lanark, a small village with a big heart, some 15 km north of Perth. It had a two-day Green Festival, where all sorts of natural energy devices were exhibited, from solar panels to windmills to biomass opportunities. Hydro One was the main sponsor, hoping that this would make them look like a green company. Well – more about that later. First something else.

Even before I entered the arena where the exhibits were, I had already concluded a deal with a man from Arnprior, who sold me 30 litres of recycled cooking oil. Cooking oil? For what? For my car. He would collect the oil from the various restaurants in his hometown, filter out the solids through four different screens, resulting in a perfectly golden color. A bargain at 62 cents a litre. Ever since, I have mixed two litres of the stuff in with my diesel fill up. As soon as my supply is exhausted, I will buy another 100 litres, for a number of reasons: bio fuel, as it is called, makes the engine perform better, is cleaner, safer and less harmful to the environment. It's also renewable, ignites more quickly, leading to quicker starts and quieter engine operation.

Before I bought my Jetta TDI, Turbo Direct Injection, diesel-powered, I shopped around for a Prius, a so-called Hybrid, touted as the most efficient and environmentally friendly car. I discovered that a Prius is basically a city car, where the charging of the batteries depends on a constant stop-and-go. Its mileage on the highway is no better than any other small car. Also it has a gasoline engine, which cannot use recycled fuel, as a diesel does. I average 23 km per litre or 65 miles per gallon. I live in the country and only drive long distances. For errands in town, almost 6 km away, I bike, weather permitting. So I ruled out a Hybrid.

In our house the motto is Hydro Gone, with the help of 10 solar panels. Here is my problem. When it is sunny for days on end – not too much this summer, alas – I collect more electricity than my batteries can store. So I wanted to test the real commitment of the Green Days sponsor to renewable power and sought out its representative. He assured me that it was possible to pump my extra power back into the grid. The man promised to contact me directly, taking both my telephone number and e-mail address.

Of course, nothing happened. So I contacted Hydro. I did receive a prompt reply from the Public Relations Department and was again promised that the knowledgeable person would contact me.

So far, 5 weeks later, nobody has and nobody will. Perhaps, really, really perhaps, somebody up there in Hydro One will read this and act. In the meantime I will keep on breathing.

That bring me to another Big Enterprise, Bell Canada, your Phone, Long Distance, Satellite and Internet provider.

I read that if I were to combine all Bell Canada services, I would save $15.00 per month, on top of lower monthly charges. Star Choice, my current supplier, had been increasing my monthly bill, while decreasing access to my favorite channel, BBC World, discontinuing it abruptly and wanting 99 cents more. That sort of irked me. Also, my Internet provider did nothing to block some 40 spam items per day. Sympatico offered a screening service. So I planned to save money and benefit all around.

However. Everything went wrong, so wrong that in deep frustration I sent a registered letter to the top boss at Bell.

Mr Michael J. Sabia
President and CEO Bell Canada Enterprises
1000 de la Gauchetiere W
Montreal Quebec H3B 4Y7

Dear Mr Sabia,

Heeding your call to bundle all information services with your company – I already subscribe to your long distance services – I proceeded on August 6, 2004 to acquire your Sympatico system – replacing my Allstream Internet connection – as well as the Bell Express Vu kit as a substitute for my Star Choice satellite service.

When I, on August 10, phoned the required number, and contacted a 'live' voice after a 35 minute hold period, I was promised installation on Thursday, August 12 between 5 and 9 p.m. Waiting patiently till 9 p.m. nobody showed up.

The next day, August 13, after a 65 minute 'hold' hearing the reassuring voice that "your call is important to us" about 100 times, I was again promised installation that same day. Again nobody came and no one called.

Desperate for an answer to these severe lapses in customer relations I now contact you, in the hope that as CEO you can manage to order one of your employees to help me to enjoy the benefits of your company.

Yours, still trusting that matters will turn out well,
Bert Hielema.

That was not all. Both of my sons-in-law, highly skilled computer whizzes, were unable to get Sympatico connected, after I had spent hours trying to do it myself. None of the 'technicians' I contacted after hours of waiting were of any help either.

The next day I returned the works and got only a partial refund. I did get a response from Bell. About a week later, in the evening, our telephone rang during supper time. Expecting another telemarketer, I was surprised to hear a 'live' voice from Bell.

The man, evidently a French person, offered all sorts of excuses, sob stories how the firm who had contracted to do the installations, had gone belly up. He offered me a measly $50.00 if I would still go ahead. He also told me, when I complained about the Internet mess, that my iMac computer was incompatible with Sympatico, even though the booklet gave instructions for it.

I refused his bribe, even though the experience cost me $20.00 in expenses and hours of total frustration.

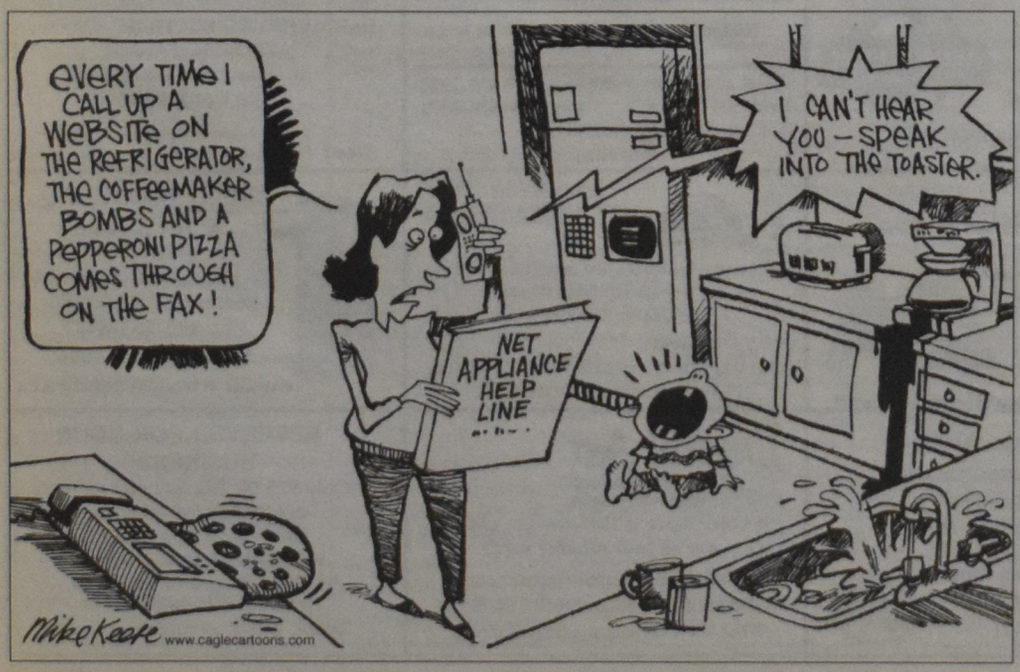
Have monopoly positions in electricity and telephone services made these companies Twentieth Century Dinosaurs?

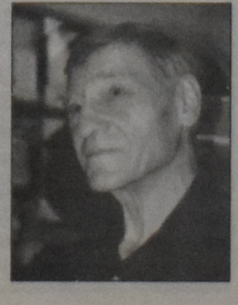
One of my aims in life is to minimize the use of non-renewable fuels, also a matter of economics. Last week when my propane tank was filled, I noticed that the charge per litre was 93.5 cents. Outrageous. And it's going to go up even more. I have a solar system, and also a windmill situated on a tower, of course, way up there, to catch maximum wind.

Unless you are located near the sea or on the prairies, don't ever buy a wind system. I've had nothing but trouble with it. Had to return the windmill a couple of times to the manufacturer in Flagstaff Arizona, as, after a few years, it simply would seize up and stop producing. A dangerous job, climbing the shaky tower, decoupling the wires and easing it down. Not recommended.

It still sits there, way up high, but basically is a useless ornament. Even when operating full blast it only gave a fraction of what solar panels produce. Solar panels are a technological marvel. Photovoltaic, they convert sunlight directly into electricity. An inverter makes it compatible with the grid, converting to AC from DC, or the other way around. I always forget which is which.

With power shortages looming, and prices rapidly accelerating, I can recommend solar power. I am sure that since I bought the system about 12 years ago prices have decreased, while electricity rates have jumped and will do so much more rapidly from now on.


EVERY TIME I CALL UP A WEBSITE ON THE REFRIGERATOR, THE COFFEEMAKER BOMBS AND A PEPPERONI PIZZA COMES THROUGH ON THE FAX!
I CAN'T HEAR YOU – SPEAK INTO THE TOASTER.
NET APPLIANCE HELP LINE
MikeKeefe www.caglecartoons.com



Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ontario. His website has been updated, now including all past columns as well as other writings: www.geocities.com/hielemab

Classifieds

NETHERLANDS BAZAAR – FOOD PARCELS

A year ago this October, the Dutch-Canadian community gathered at the Netherlands Bazaar to raise money for needy families of Dutch descent across Ontario. During Christmas 2003, the Committee "Netherlands Bazaar" was able to use part of the raised funds to distribute 420 much needed food parcels at a total cost of $46,000. In addition, $25,000 was used, this summer, to send 100 disadvantaged children to a summer camp.

If you know of any family of Dutch extraction in Ontario, in extremely difficult financial circumstances, we would appreciate hearing from you before Wednesday November 17, 2004. We want to surprise them with a food parcel before the festive season. Please note that we must know the number of family members, the ages of the children and the reason why they should receive aid. We must also have the name and telephone number of a contact person who can verify this information. The families who received a parcel last year will not automatically receive one this year. All submitted names will be kept in strict confidence.

Forward letters to: Committee "Netherlands Bazaar"
Attn: Mrs. G. Spaans,
15 Pavilion St
Unionville ON L3R 1N8

The following committee members may also be notified by phone: Ge Spaans 905-4771243,
Bets Speelman 416-742-1172,
or Jannie Thomas 416-223-5026.

You can also help by making handicrafts for the next Bazaar to be held on Saturday, October 15, 2005. Please join us once again in this worthwhile endeavour!

Thank-you! Committee "Netherlands Bazaar"

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS

Each year *Christian Courier* produces a church directory for the 13 Christian Reformed Churches in Classis Niagara. This project is financially feasible thanks to the many Christian organizations and businesses which buy advertising space in the directory.

Email: ncd@christiancourier.ca
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Please contact us before Oct.15, 2004.

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About Us
Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Operated by Elim Housing Society, a non-profit organization, Elim Village is a unique Christian retirement community. When fully developed it will be home to some 700 seniors and will offer a wide variety of housing and care options. More than 125 independent living apartments and duplexes are now completed. Construction is currently underway on 109 supportive and assisted living apartments, with a completion date mid 2005. Future plans call for an Amenity Building, Complex Care, and additional Apartments which the new Bonds will be used for.

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Classifieds

Anniversaries

1959 October 2 2004
Forest ON Ottawa ON

"Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will act." Ps. 37:5

We give praise and thanks to God,
together with our
parents and grandparents

BERTUS AND ALICE SCHREIBER
(Van Rooyen)

on the occasion of their
45th Wedding Anniversary
on October 2, 2004.

Sylvia & Tymen VanStryland, *Ottawa, ON*
Kyle, Vykki
Martha Schreiber & Shiao Chong,
Alyssa, Bethany, *Mississauga, ON*
John Schreiber, *Ottawa, ON*
Derek & Jane Schreiber, *Edmonton, AB*
Katherine, Ben

Address: 17 Quinpool Cres
Nepean ON K2H 6H9

October 24, 1954 October 24, 2004
Kentville, NS London, ON

Timothy 6:6

Praised be the Lord, who in his infinite wisdom, joined us together and in goodness and mercy has guided us through these past **50 years**.

NEAL AND GRACE VANGALEN
(nee **Adema**)

Con VanGalen, Springfield, ON
Jackie, Steven
Anita Hofstee, London, ON
Pieter, Eric, Luke

would be very pleased if you would join us in this joyful celebration on October 23, 2004, D.V.

Open House from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
at "Cornerstone U R C"
160 Waterloo St, London ON
Your presence will be a gift to us.

Home address: 1589 Hansuld St
London ON N5V 1Y4

Aylmer, ON St. Thomas, ON
1959 2004

"Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand."
Ps 73:23

With thanksgiving to our God
for his continuing faithfulness,
we hope, D.V, to celebrate the
45th Wedding Anniversary
of our parents and grandparents

HENRY AND CYNTHIA SMIT
(nee **Booy**)

Congratulations Dad and Mom!
We pray for God's blessings
for you both in the coming years.

With all our love,
Tom & Margriet Smit, *Sarnia*
Sean, Nathan, Zachary, Janessa,
Aaron, Ian
Trish & Ed Wolting, *Chatham*
Cindy, Jessica, Melissa
Kathy & Bill Vanderlinde, *Sarnia*
Jonathon, Ryan, Amy, Eric, Timothy
Brian & Diane Smit, *Strathroy*
Matthew, Kaitlyn
Jeff & Bonnie Smit, *Wyoming*
Kesha, Kassandra, Kevin
Dan Smit, *St. Thomas*

Home address: 790 Elm St
St. Thomas ON N5R 1L5

1979 October 19 2004

With thankfulness and praise to God we

BERTHA AND FRED DE JONG
(Pol-Pennings)

wish to announce our
25th Wedding Anniversary.

Home address: 4 Crestview Ct
St. Thomas ON N5P 4J6

Memoriam

In memory of

WILKJE (Hilda) DEVRIES
(formerly **Beeksma**, nee **Baarda**)

October 12, 1918 April 9, 2004

It will be six months since God took our Mom home with him. She will be especially missed this Thanksgiving, as her birthdate was always celebrated at this time. Her strength and faith remain an inspiration for the rest of us.

Lovingly remembered by:
Jack Beeksma
Eb & Bob Quist
Amy & Gerry McCracken
Jim & Barbara Beeksma
and grandchildren.

She was laid to rest in
Riverside Cemetery beside our Dad
who passed away April 2, 1962

Obituary

Donkerbroek, Friesland Grimsby, ON
November 4, 1917 August 25, 2004

"The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid." Psalm 27:1

HEINE SIETSMA

went home to be with his Lord and Savior

Dad was always happy and would sing and whistle praises to the Lord. He had a caring and loving spirit and was always there when you needed him. He was predeceased by his wife Geertje (1999) and a son-in-law Harry Wiersma (1987).

Loving father and Opa of:
Lucy & Jan Visscher
Laura & Jim Huurman
Ryan, Marisa, Sarah
Michael & Sandra Wiersma
Katlyn, Sierra
Cheryl & Albert Wimmers
Benjamin, Madison, Robyn, Adrianna
Paula Wiersma
Gerry & John Weenink
Sandra & Darcey Mullan
Stephanie & Louis Papail – Jesse
Stephen & Charlotte Weenink
Marijke & Andy Van Driel
David & Shawna
Tim
Scott & Sonya
Rosie & John

We will miss you Dad, but we will meet you again someday!

Correspondence to: Lucy Visscher
17 Ghent Street
St. Catharines ON L2N 2C5
lucy.visscher@sympatico.ca

Obituaries

The Lord took home his child
and she shall dwell
in the house of the Lord forever.

JOHANNA VANDERLEEUW MEYER
(nee **Wienen**)

In her 97th year

February 26, 1908 - September 20, 2004

Survived by her children:
John Meyer (Marion), *Escondido, CA*
Gertie VanderBeek (William), *Langley,BC*
Garry Meyer (Roxie), *Balfour, BC*
Rina Roos (John), *Grande Prairie, AB*
John Meyer (Carol), *Calgary, AB*
Jake Meijer (Sandra), *Adams Lake, BC*
Joanne Ravensbergen (John), *Abbotsford,BC*
Henrietta Johnson (Roger), *Vancouver,BC*

Survived by two daughters-in-law:
Jean Meyer, *Calgary AB*
Anne Meyer, *Calgary AB*

Survived by 30 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren.

Also survived by stepchildren:
John Vanderleeuw (Mary), *Mount Forest,ON*
Tena Kielstra (Jake), *Chatham, ON*
Jake Vanderleeuw (Ann), *London, ON*
Margaret Nywening (Wilbert), *Wyoming,ON*
Jim Vanderleeuw (Wilma), *Waterloo, ON*
Florence (Stuart) Schaafsma, *Blenheim,ON*
and their children and grandchildren.

Predeceased by:
John Meyer (her first husband) in 1965
Stan Vanderleeuw (her second husband) in 1987
Harry Meyer (son) in 1973
Al Meyer (son) in 2003
Kelvin Roos (grandson) in 1988

A memorial service
was held in Chatham, Ontario
on Wednesday, September 22, 2004.
A funeral service was held in Calgary, Alberta on Saturday, September 25, 2004.

Memorial contributions may be made to the "Back to God Hour" radio program. Online condolences may be made at www.obituariestoday.com

---

29 March 1912 23 September 2004
Aalzum, Friesland Burlington, Ontario

The Lord took unto himself,
his child, our mother

ANTJE VAN DER VELDE (nee **Sikma**)

Beloved wife of the late
Gerrit van der Velde (1981).
Dear mother of Nellie and Wilfred.
Dear sister of Sjouko (Koos) Sikma & his wife Klazien and sister-in-law Marie van der Velde-de Beer all of *Holland*.

Funeral service took place September 25, 2004, Rev. Andrew Zantingh and Rev. William Paterson officiating.

"Send forth your light and your truth,
let them guide me;
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.
Then will I go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and my delight."
Psalm 43:3 & 4

Correspondence may be sent to:
Nellie van der Velde
Wilfred van der Velde
634 Bayshore Blvd
Burlington ON L7T 1T2

Nyelamer, the Netherlands - Brantford, Ontario
October 4, 1907 August 28, 2004

JACOBA (Koos) REITSMA
(nee **Snyder**)

went to her eternal home.

Dear wife of the late Abraham Reitsma (1960)
Beloved mother of Fred & Helen Reitsma
Dear Oma of:
Kim & Brad Van Haitsma
Jacinda & Terry Numan – Avery
Lesley & Steven deBoer
Madeline, Samuel
Angela Reitsma
Meghan Reitsma

The interment took place in Hamilton, Ontario followed by a memorial service at the Mount Hamilton CRC on Thursday, Sept 2, 2004 with Pastor Jeff Janssen officiating.

Philippians 4:11 "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."

July 3, 1914 September 5, 2004
Oudega, Friesland Exeter, Ontario

Psalm 27:4a
"One thing I ask of the Lord,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life."

After a courageous life
the Lord took home his child

SIEBERGJEN POORTINGA

Daughter of the late Meindert Riemersma and Wopkje Hoekstra.

Dear Stepmother of:
Bertha Van Soest, *Drayton*
Jim & Henny Poortinga, *Woodham*
Clarence & Pat Poortinga, *Brussels*
Henry & Hilly Poortinga, *Hensall*
Janke Wielenga & Alice Den Otter, *Thunder Bay*
16 grandchildren &
21 great-grandchildren

Predeceased by:
Husbands: Jacob de Jong (1954)
George Poortinga (1984)
Children: Durk de Jong (1954)
Aaltje de Jong (1954)
Wopkje de Jong (1959)
Son-in-law: John Van Soest (2003)
2 brothers & 2 sisters, *Friesland*

Survived by family in Friesland
Sjoerd & Jeltje Riemersma
Gooitske & Sietse van der Velde
Dieke Jacobi

The funeral service was held at the Christian Reformed Church, Exeter, Ontario on September 8, 2004 with Pastor Harry Frielink officiating. Internment Exeter Cemetery.

Correspondence: P. Poortinga
RR #2
Brussels ON N0G 1H0

Dronrijp Woodstock
Friesland Ontario

On September 23, 2004,
our dear father

FOPPE ARENDS (Paul) DE JONG

went home to be with the Lord in his 88th year. He left us with the sung assurance that "It is well, it is well with my soul." He will be missed by his extended family and by the Reformed faith community that he loved and served so well.

Predeceased by his wife Jessie (Jet) earlier this year.

Missed by:
Jessie & Al Schut, *Edmonton*
Kevin, Kristin and Karina; Steven; Jonathan, Emma and Aya; Danielle
Sue & Bob Pallister, *Bothwell*
Gini, Scott, Allyssa and Matthew; Greg, Cindy, Jeffery and Bradley; James, Deb and Gabriel.
Frances & Don Ross, *Edmonton*
Connor, Liam.
Also missed by sister Sietske in the *Netherlands* and in-laws
Rudolph & Freda Wesselson, *Embro*
and Ann & Andy Luth, *Woodstock*.

Condolences may be sent to
J. Schut
14615-84 Ave
Edmonton AB T5R 3X1

GERRIT WILLEM VAN ARRAGON

With his wife and family by his bedside, Gerrit Willem van Arragon, in his 91st year, went to be with his Lord on September 24, 2004, in Strathroy, Ontario, Canada. Dearly loved husband of Harmina Linde van Arragon, and father of:
Jenny & Martin Oldengarm, *Kitchener, ON*
Geertje & Charles Bamford, *San Jose, CA*
MaryAnn & Jerry Kingma, *Strathroy, ON*
Gary & Gretchen van Arragon, *Guelph, ON*
Leo & Cathy van Arragon, *Ottawa, ON*
Harma Badgley, *Trenton, ON*
Wilma van Arragon & Ralph Linder, *Chicago, IL*
Wayne Collinson, *Strathroy, ON*
Mike Parker & Eleanor Thompson, *Belleville, ON*
Dan Fletcher, *Oakville, ON*
Dearly loved Opa of 19 grandchildren & 10 great-grandchildren.

Also survived by his brother, Herman and Fem, in *Brazil*; his sister, Hendrika Klumpenhower-van Arragon, of *Listowel, ON*; sister-in-law, Nel Fieten-van Arragon, *Zuidwolde, The Netherlands*; and sister-in-law, Mina Hoogendoorn-Kuipery, *Brampton, ON*. Beloved uncle to many nephews and nieces. We are grateful to the Lord for our father's long life, and his service to his Lord, his family, his church and his community.

The interment took place at a private family ceremony in Strathroy, prior to the memorial service, which was held at the Westmount Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy, Ontario, on Monday, September 27, 2004. The service was officiated by Rev. Fred Vanderberg.

As a tribute to his memory, you will gladden our hearts by visiting a lonely resident in a nursing home near you.

Correspondence: MaryAnn & Jerry Kingma
28256 Pike Road RR 7, Strathroy ON N7G 3H8

Classifieds

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Rob Datema has faithfully served as Youth Pastor of Maranatha CRC in Woodstock since 1995. He has completed his term of service at Maranatha CRC. We are grateful for the work he has accomplished and we heartily recommend him to the churches. Candidate Rob Datema can be contacted at

Maranatha CRC
577 Norwich Ave RR8
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phone 519-539-5301 or
rdatema@execulink.com

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Please send resumes to:

William Van Dyke, Principal
Maranatha Christian Academy
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Phone: 519-966-7424 **Fax:** 519-966-9519
Email: office@maranathachristian.ca
Web: www.maranathachristian.ca

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TABER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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Applications will be accepted until January 07,2005.

Please direct inquiries or applications to:

Marilyn Visser
4809 60 Avenue, Taber, Alberta T1G 1E9
ph: 403-223-4550 Fax: 403-223-4693
taberchristian@shaw.ca

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4:00 - 5:00 pm in the Executive Dining Room
Evening Lecture, *The Global Century: The Corporatization of Civilization*,
8: 00 -9:15 pm, in the Executive Dining Room

for more information please contact
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Search Committee Secretary
Nancy Nieboer
Box 178 Iron Springs, AB, Canada T0K 1G0
Phone/Fax: 403-738-4687,
E-mail: lnmrc@telusplanet.net

REDEEMER University College

Redeemer University College invites applications for tenure-track positions, beginning in July 2005, in the following departments:

Department of Education
Elementary teaching experience is important with a preference for a specialization in curriculum studies, educational psychology or special education.

Department Of English
Candidates should have a specialization in the area of Canadian Literature. Secondary interest in one of the following would be an asset: American Literature, Creative Writing, and Expository Writing. The successful candidate must demonstrate a willingness to teach introductory courses as part of the regular course assignment.

Department Of History
Candidates must be specialists in Western European and/or British History and be able to teach a one-term survey course in Western Civilization. Preference will be given to those who can also teach in a non-Western field.

There may also be a tenure-track position open in the **Department of Physical Education**. Applications are invited for a position which may begin in July 2005 in the Social Sciences of Kinesiology and Physical Education.

As a liberal arts and sciences university college rooted in the Reformed tradition of Christianity, we seek candidates who are committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from this perspective. Applicants should possess, or be near completion of, a Ph.D. Interested applicants should submit a curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, and a one-page or two-page statement describing their own faith commitment and how it shapes their academic work. The deadline for applications is **November 15, 2004** or until the positions are filled.

Direct general inquiries and applications to:
Dr. Jacob P. Ellens, Vice-President (Academic)
Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4 Canada
jellens@redeemer.on.ca. **www.redeemer.on.ca**

Redeemer University College offers equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants. In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be considered first for these positions.

See our website:
christiancourier.ca
for job ads recently run in the Christian Courier.
Also information on issue dates and deadlines.

Classifieds

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CHRISTIAN LABOUR ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

BIENNIAL CONVENTION
OCTOBER 29 - 30, 2004

The Christian Labour Association of Canada will conduct its biennial Convention, under the theme "Growing the Union" on Friday, October 29 and Saturday, October 30, 2004 at the Four Points Sheraton in London, Ontario.

The Christian community is invited to join us, particularly at the Friday evening banquet session. For tickets please call Susan Salvati at (905) 670-7383 or by e-mailing her at ssalvati@clac.ca.

Tickets are $25 per person, $45 per couple and $15 for students.

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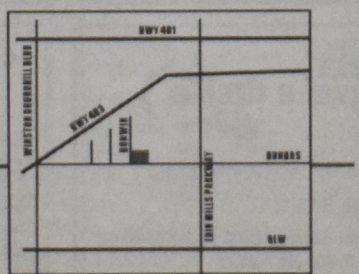

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Classifieds

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"Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations" – Psalm 90:1

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A DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND TRAINING

for deacons, elders and all other interested church members on

Saturday October 16

Hamilton District Christian High School in Ancaster.

Theme: "Burst into Bloom!"
Choose from 50 workshops and 15 "Service Sites."
All sessions are open to everyone. Cost: $50.
Contact your deacons for a registration form, or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905)336-2920 or visit us at www.diaconalministries.com

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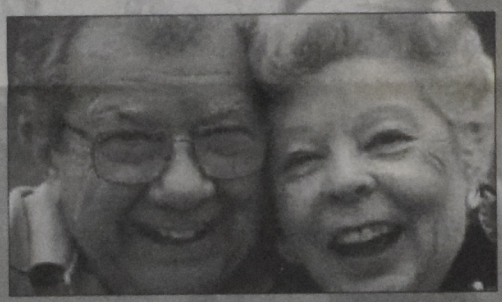

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Welkom

A **DUTCH SERVICE**
will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church
October 10 at 3 p.m.
Rev. J. Hellinga preaching.

MARANATHA HOMES

is an award-winning ***Senior Citizen Home*** located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church. Audio hook-up for the Sunday services is available in every apartment and there is a weekly evening video church service presentation.

Local bus service at the door. **Information available from:**

Rosanne van der Woerd
3260 New St. Unit 109
Burlington ON L7N 3L4
905-639-9054

For pictures and more information, go to our website at:
http://home.worldchat.com/~hordyk/MaranathaHomes.html

Dutch Community Christmas Song Service

on **Sunday, November 28** at **7:30 p.m.** at the

Emmanuel Reformed Church
170 Clarke St. **Woodstock**

Service led by Rev. Roeland Hartmans. Babysitting is provided. Refreshments served after the service.
"We hope that you all can come."

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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct 10 A **dutch service** will be held in the **Ancaster** Chr Ref church at 3 pm. Rev J.Hellinga preaching

Oct 16 Leendert Kooij and the Choir and brass of the **Ont. Chr. Music Assembly** at Maranatha CRC, Hwy 2, **Bowmanville**, 7:30 pm. An offering for Partners International. Rev. Brian Lise speaker.

Oct 16 A Day of Encouragement and training for deacons, elders and all other interested church members at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**. Theme: "Burst into Bloom". Choose from 50 workshops and 15 "Service Sites". All sessions are open to everyone.Cost: $50. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905)336-2920 or visit us at www.diaconalministries.com.

Oct 23 Leendert Kooij and the Choir and brass of the Ont. Chr. Music Assembly at St. George's Anglican Ch. Woolwich St. **Guelph**, 7:30 pm. Offering for Partners International. Rev. Brian Lise, Speaker.

Oct 23 Worldwide Christian Schools fundraiser - Concert, **Liberation Choir** 8 pm. at Rehoboth United Reformed Church, 77 Glancaster Rd, **Hamilton**, ON. Please contact WCS to purchase tickets: (905) 387-0235 or canada@wwcs.org

Oct 23 TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL invites all alumni and supporters to its 40th Anniversary and New Building Dedication. Tours and celebration program, 2170 Itabashi Way, **Burlington**, ON. Ph: 905-634-3052. www.tcsonline.ca See next issue for more info.

Oct 25 **Heritage Day** (formerly Senior's Day) Registration 9:30 am. Program & activities 10 am to 3 pm. at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster**. Call 905-648-2131 ext. 4208 to register. See ad.

Oct 28, 29 **OCSTA** 50th anniversary convention at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster,** and the Hamilton District Christian High School; inspirational address: Dr. Anthony Campolo; educational address: Prof. Hugh Cook. website: www.ocsta.org

Oct 29,30 **CLAC** Biennial Convention "Growing the Union", Four Points Sheraton, **London**, Ont. See ad

Oct 30 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Wallaceburg** CRC, 150 Bruinsma Ave. **Wallaceburg** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

Nov. 5 **Christian Festival Concert**, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, 7:30 pm. Order tickets from Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Ph: 416-636-9779 or email: landmkooy@rogers.com

Nov 6 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Maranatha** CRC, 2811 Highway #2 East **Bowmanville** (Free will offering) Info:(519) 637-4357

Nov. 6,7 **Calvin** CRC, **Dundas**, Ont. will celebrate their **50th year**. Come join our celebration! Festivities are being planned. For info: Fred VanderVelde at 905-336-5619 Fax: 905-336-2376 or Brenda DeGroot at 905-689-6350 or email: p-b.degroot@sympatico.ca

Nov 12 Concert, **Clinton** CRC 7:30 pm. A program of organ, piano, and vocal music by the Kruisselbrink Sisters from Tara, Ont. and the Men of Note. Info: 519-482-5372

Nov. 13 The Lighthouse Christian Community Centre annual **International Dinner and Silent Auction**. Help celebrate and support this inner-city ministry. New, better banquet facility: Columbus Hall, Lawrence and Dufferin, **Toronto**. Reservations required in advance: Lighthouse 416 535-6262 or email janet@lighthousecentre.ca

Nov 27 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Bethel** CRC, 17 Robinson Road, off Hwy. #3 **Dunnville** (Freewill Offering) Info:(905) 387-0235

Nov 28 Dutch Community Christmas Song Service at 7:30 p.m. **Woodstock** . See ad bottom p.22

Dec 12 **Christmas Concert** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Knox** Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street, **St. Thomas** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

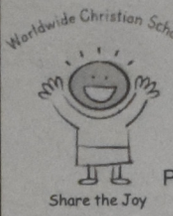
Dec 19 **Christmas Concert** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Knox** Presbyterian Church, 9 Victoria Street North, **Goderich.** Info: (519) 637-4357

2005

Apr 9 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Bethel** CRC, 716 Classic Drive, **London** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

May 1 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Knox** Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street, **St. Thomas** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

Worldwide Christian Schools – Canada



invites you to attend
two upcoming fundraising concerts:

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77 Glancaster Rd, Hamilton, ON
October 23, 2004 – 8:00 pm
Tickets: $14.00 or $15.00 at the door
Please contact WCS to purchase tickets:
(905) 387-0235 or canada@wwcs.org

St.Thomas Male Choir "Crescendo"–
Bethel Christian Reformed Church
17 Robinson Rd, off Hwy 3, Dunnville, ON
November 27, 2004 – 7:30PM
FREEWILL OFFERING

Concerts of Sacred Music
by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir

Please join us at the following locations

Wallaceburg, Sat. October 30, 2004- 7:30 pm
Christian Reformed Church, 150 Bruinsma Ave.

Bowmanville, Sat. November 6, 2004- 7:30 pm
Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 2811 Highway #2 East

Dunnville, Sat. November 27, 2004-7:30 pm
Bethel Christian Reformed Church, 17 Robinson Road, off Hwy. #3

St. Thomas, Sun. December 12. 2004-7:30 pm (Christmas)
Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street

Goderich, Sun. December 19, 2004- 7:30 pm (Christmas)
Knox Presbyterian Church, 9Victoria Street North

London, Sat. April 9, 2005- 7:30 pm
Bethel Christian Reformed Church, 716 Classic Drive

St. Thomas, Sun. May 1, 2005-7:30 pm
Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street

All Free will Offerings - For information (519) 637-4357

CALVIN CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF DUNDAS-ONTARIO

will celebrate their **50th year** as a congregation
at 420 Highway 5 in Dundas, D.V.,
on Saturday, **November 6, 2004** & Sunday **November 7, 2004**

All former members and friends are invited to come and celebrate with us. Festivities are being planned. Come join our celebration!

For more information please contact Anniversary Committee members:

Chairman: Fred VanderVelde Tel: 905-336-5619 Fax: 905-336-2376

Secretary: Brenda DeGroot Tel: 905-689-6350
E-mail: p-b.degroot@sympatico.ca

NOTE: *We are currently looking for pictures and other memorabilia that we could use for publishing and/or displaying.*

Please mail to the church address:
420 Highway #5 W., P.O.Box 129,
Millgrove, ON L0R 1V0

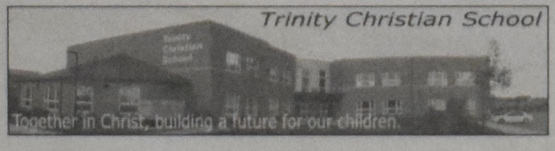
OCSTA

is celebrating its 50th anniversary at this years's convention

October 28 & 29, at Redeemer University College & Hamilton District Christian High School

Inspirational address:
Dr. Anthony Campolo

Educational address:
Prof. Hugh Cook



40th Anniversary & Building Dedication

Forever rooted in Christ,

TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
invites all alumni and supporters
to its **40th Anniversary** and **New Building Dedication**
on **Sat. Oct. 23**. Facility tours at 1 pm and celebration program
at 2pm. **2170 Itabashi Way, Burlington, Ontario.**
Phone **905-634-3052**.
www.tcsonline.ca Colossians 2:7

With thankfulness to our Sovereign God,
the congregation of the

LIVING WATER REFORMED CHURCH
(formerly the Independent CRC of Ancaster)

announces the completion of their facility.
We invite friends to our **dedication service** on
November 5, 2004 at 7:30 pm.
in our building located at 1569 Colborne St.,
(formerly Hwy 2/53 East) Brantford, Ontario.

News

Holland Christian Homes celebrates opening of new addition

A village of some 1100, white-haired Hollanders (mostly) flourishes smack dab in the heart of Canada. A marvel of multiculturalism and a tribute to the organizing ability and industriousness of board members over a stretch of more than 25 years.

My wife, Rose, and I were invited to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of Holland Christian Homes and the official opening of the sixth tower of this impressive complex – the Peace Tower – and the 120 bed Grace Manor attached to it. Like everyone else in the Christian Reformed Church, I had heard about Holland Christian Homes (HCH) in Brampton many times before, but I had never before visited the place. Six tall buildings reach far into the Brampton sky – Trinity, Hope, Covenant, Providence, King and now Peace, the last one, for the property can accommodate no more. And with Grace Manor, a facility for seniors requiring assistance attached to it, it is the crown jewel.

The new Peace Tower and Grace Manor.

Peace Tower entrance

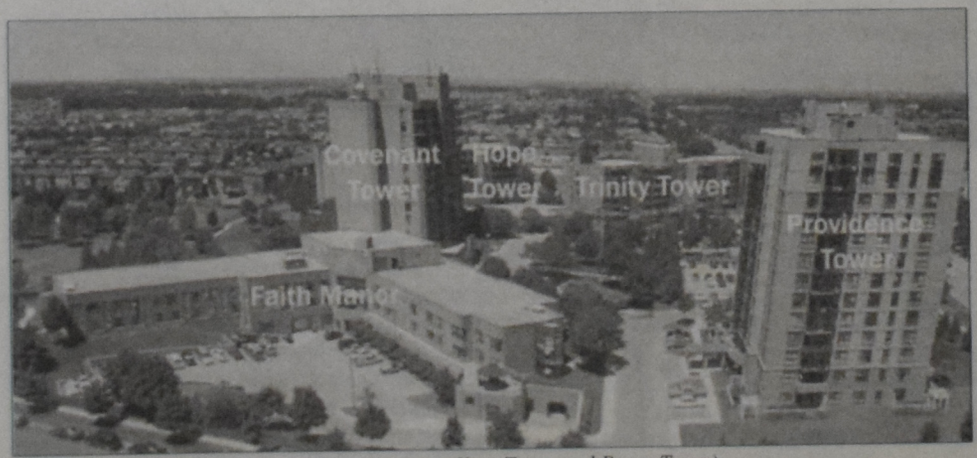
There's another nursing home that is also part of the village, Faith Manor, a two-storey, V-shaped building near the centre of the complex.

In another building, the Ebenezer Centre, along with administrative offices (some 350 people work here), there's a hair salon, a minimart, a greenhouse (of course), a game room and a couple of lounges. Everyone can access this area no matter what the weather because all the buildings are interconnected by underground tunnels. In the winter many of the residents use the tunnels to jog (Dutch jogging – it is considerably more stately than the Canadian kind).

There's a chapel, roomy as a full-sized church, to which a local artist has added stained glass windows. Rev. Herman Praamsma, one of three chaplains who serve the community, told me he was preaching in Dutch that coming Sunday. Although not everyone who lives in Holland Christian Homes is of Dutch ancestry, a huge majority are, and even though most have spoken English most of their adult lives, some begin to revert to their mother tongue as they age. This is one of the reasons the Canadian government encourages and supports the development of ethnic retirement complexes like this one.

As we arrived, a carillon, sporting almost 20 bells, chimed out a hymn, not exactly on tune, but recognizable, to remind us that this little kingdom is part of the larger kingdom, of whose peace this one gives a small foretaste. The carillon stood beside a well-tended flower garden. There are several of these colorful flower plots as well as some vegetable gardens on the grounds, so those with a green thumb among the residents have obviously spent some time on their hands and knees conversing with the soil.

The day of the opening ceremony was a gorgeous, sunny day, so the ribbon-cutting was held outdoors in front of the new building. There were dignitaries from every level of government, welcomed and flattered by Fred van Laare, the VP of HCH. They do genuinely deserve some praise along with the board and staff for the completion of this awesome retirement village, for without their help and without the possibilities created by our lawmakers, this place would not have become a reality. It is the fruit of long-term cooperation between private initiative and government support.



Overview of Holland Christian Homes (Missing is King Tower and Peace Tower)

The Minister of Health of Ontario, George Smitherman, waxed eloquent about the value of diversity and his government's expansion of the number of spaces for long-term care. The Mayor of Bramption, Susan Fennell said that people came from far away to look at HCH as a model for such projects and they went away marveling at the great atmosphere they witness here.

As the dignitaries had their say, residents from the nearby King Tower looked down on the proceedings from their balconies, training their *verrekijkers* (binoculars) on the crowd gathered in the parking lot. Van Laare thanked the balcony crowd for their faithful supervision of the construction of Peace Tower. Evidently, a good set of binoculars is indispensable for living in HCH. How else are you going to keep track of your neighbors?

One of the resident ladies was gracious enough to give us a tour of her apartment in the new building. We were led into a spacious living room flooded with light from large windows on two sides. You looked over Brampton and Mississauga and caught a glimpse of Lake Ontario in the distance. Every apartment has a balcony, from which you can peer out over the city or at your neighbor with your *verrekijker*. As we were shown through the roomy apartment (she even had room for a study), some of my anxieties about growing old dissipated. I could imagine myself living here without feeling like I was being put on the shelf.

Peter Dykstra, one of the people running the place, showed us through Grace Manor. We entered a large atrium whose windows rose the full three stories of the building. It was decorated with stained glass panels and some excellent artwork. The manor is divided into five different units, and the dining area of each unit looks out into the atrium, so they are flooded with natural light. Each unit houses 24 residents in a mix of private and double rooms, but even the double rooms are divided, allowing for considerable privacy.

Peter pointed to glass cabinets beside every door; each contained a display of some of the resident's favorite mementoes. Each unit also sports a lounge that opens onto a large balcony where residents can sit. Again lots of light. Peter told us that there were still plenty of private rooms left in Grace Manor, but he expected them to be filled by the end of the year.

In my job as editor of *CC*, I read and write a lot of stories about hardship and persecution. I left HCH marveling at the goodness that God has showered on us here in Canada. The residents of HCH are very aware of how blessed they have been, and here too they continue to minister to one another and to others and to praise the Lord, the Provider of all good.